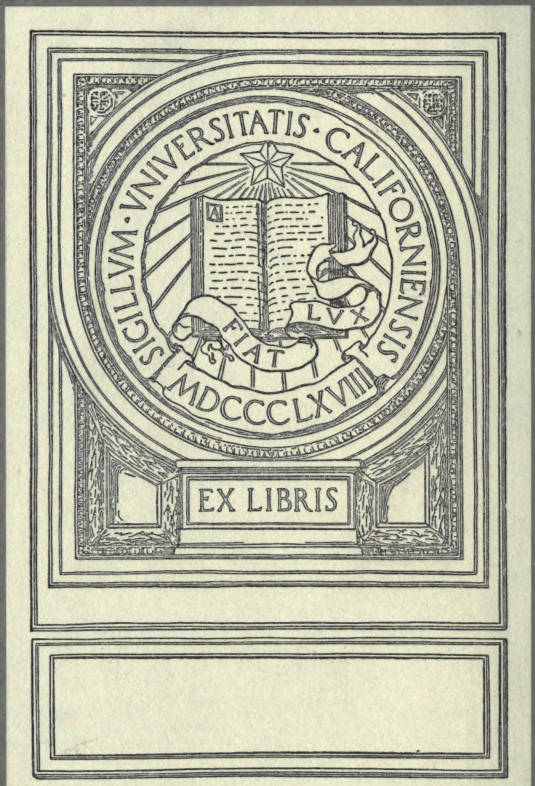
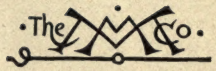

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Scene from "A Midsummer Night's Dream."

HISTORY

OF

ENGLISH LITERATURE

BY

A. S. MACKENZIE, M.A., LITT.D.

AUTHOR OF "THE EVOLUTION OF LITERATURE," ETC.
PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH LITERATURE, STATE
UNIVERSITY OF KENTUCKY

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1915

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TO WIN
A WIFE

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Norwood, Mass., U.S.A.

Dedicated

TO

THE FAITHFUL TEACHERS

OF LITERATURE

331045

PREFACE

THE sole aim of this book is to be of service to teachers and their classes. It has been written because so many instructors expressed a desire for a new guide to the literary masters. For years it has been the privilege of the author to examine students from colleges and secondary schools as well as to teach high school and university classes. He has lectured on English literature before Teachers' Institutes and Associations in twelve states of the Union, and has thus had opportunities of learning the needs of alert and capable teachers. He also possesses a first-hand knowledge of some of the authors and of all the places of literary interest in the British Isles.

This study of the great writers is concise enough to give readers ample time to fall in love with the treasures of English literature. It is better to read and enjoy one play or one poem than to read many books about the play or the poem. A taste for good books exalts the meaning of everyday events, and it gives courage in life's battle. Certainly literature is most practical.

Among the new features of this manual are its inclusion of a brief chapter on the earliest literature of Britain and one on the popular ballad, and its exclusion of everything that might confuse or mislead youthful readers. Some of the maps and illustrations have never before appeared. There are numerous books about the authors and works of each period, but mention is made only of those that are

deemed essential for the main purpose of this volume. So far as Suggested Readings are concerned, it seems wiser to leave details to the individuality of the reader. Neither teachers nor their classes should be obliged to follow any text-book slavishly. They should have scope to show their own originality and power of research, without which the best results cannot be obtained.

I am under obligation to my colleague Professor L. E. Nollau and to Mr. J. M. Turner of Lexington for excellent photographs, to Mr. Wayne Davies for literary maps, and to Mr. H. Felix for pen-and-ink sketches. I also thank the many teachers throughout the country who have read and approved the manuscript. The portrait of Milton at the age of twenty-one is reproduced from Milton Memorial Lectures through the courtesy of the Royal Society of Literature.

A. S. M.

Lexington, Kentucky.


LITERARY MAP
OF
ENGLAND
AND WALES
Scale of English Miles
0 10 20 40 60 80 100
SCOTLAND
IRELAND
NORTH CHANNEL
Solway Firth
ISLE OF MAN
IRISH SEA
NORTH SEA
ANGLESEY
CARDIGAN BAY
WALES
ST. GEORGES CHANNEL
BRISTOL CHANNEL
CORNWALL
ENGLISH CHANNEL
FRANCE
ISLE OF WIGHT
R. Humber
The Wash
R. Thames
London
Jarrow
Monkwearmouth
Cockermouth
Durham
Keswick
Rydal Mount
Whitby
Hipswell
Lake Windermere
Brantwood
Lancaster
York
Bradford
Leeds
Haworth
Thornton
Preston
Headingley
Wakefield
Ashton
Manchester
Liverpool
Chester
Newstead Abbey
Somersby
Lincoln
Hanley
Nottingham
Derby
Stafford
Rothley Temple
Lynn Regis
Shrewsbury
Lichfield
Arbury
Leicester
Norwich
Montgomery Castle
Wolverhampton
Birmingham
Aldwinkle
Ludlow
Nuneaton
Kenilworth
Coventry
Rugby
Warwick
Olney
Cambridge
Leamington
Stratford-on-Avon
Bedford
Elstow
Hereford
Caermarthen
Ledbury
CO. Newton
BRECKNOCK
Monmouth
Oxford
Greatherkhamstead
St. Albans
Malden
Stoke Poges
Wantage
Ipsden
Eton
Gads Hills
Bristol
Wrington
Steventon
Horton
Lacham
Bromley
Rochester
Canterbury
Milston
Dorking
Maidstone
Nether Stowey
Glastonbury
Moor Park
Guildford
Penshurst
Bridgewater
Sharpham Park
Winchester
Field Place
Sandwich
Rye
Portsmouth
Chichester
Tiverton
Ottery St. Mary
Dorchester
Bockhampton
Islington
Holne Vicarage
Farringford
WILLIAMS ENG. CO., NEW YORK


LITERARY MAP
OF
IRELAND
Scale of Miles
0 10 20 30 40
10°
8°
6°
54°
52°
Malin Head
Giants Causeway
NORTH CHANNEL
Bloody Foreland
Londonderry
Bann R.
Ballymena
Mountcharles
Donegal
Lough Neagh
Belfast
Omagh
Lisburn
Benwee Head
Donegal Bay
Ballyshannon
Lurgan
Dromore
Sligo
Enniskillen
Warrenpoint
Dundalk
CO. LOUTH
IRISH SEA
CLARE ISLAND
Ballyglas
Longford
Pallas
Drogheda
Lough Mask
Roscommon
Edgesworthtown
CONNEMARA
Lough Corrib
Lough Rea
Athlone
Clontarf
Galway
R. Liffey
Dublin
Newton Little
Kingstown
Galway Bay
Roxborough
Kildare
Bray
ARAN IS.
R. Shannon
Lough Derg
Ossory
Wicklow
Castle Dermot
Loop Hd.
Limerick
Kilkenny
Leighlin Bridge
R. Shannon
Tipperary
Clonmell
Broadway
Tralee
Kilcolman
Dingle Bay
Killarney
Mallow
Lismore
ATLANTIC OCEAN
ST. GEORGE'S CHANNEL
Blarney Castle
Middletown
Cork
Ram Head
Bantry Bay
Seven Heads
10° Longitude West° 8 From Greenwich 6°


LITERARY MAP
OF
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Scale of Miles
0 10 20 30 40
10°
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Bantry Bay
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LIST OF IRISH AUTHORS

Allingham, William, Ballyshannon, Co. Donegal.
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Boyle, William, Dromiskin, Co. Louth.
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Farquhar, George, Londonderry.
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Wilde, Oscar, Dublin.
Yeats, William Butler, Dublin.

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HISTORY OF ENGLISH LITERATURE

CHAPTER I

EARLIEST LITERARY PERIOD

Prior to 449 A.D.

Byron's Dying Gladiator. — Look at one of those circuses of ancient Rome. It has no roof. Purple awnings are un-



Fig. 1. — Colosseum (interior restored).

furled to shade the midsummer sun from the thousands of people seated around the arena. The emperor has given the signal and the sports are about to begin. Trained men,

runaway slaves, or prisoners of war are matched against lions and other fierce creatures. With ropes and hooks the bodies are dragged off, the bloodstained pit is covered with clean sand, and now comes a procession of gladiators. "Hail! Cæsar; those about to die salute thee!" is their greeting, as they bow before the emperor. Retiring from the arena, they return in pairs according to the published program. One man has wounded his rival, and he is looking up to find out whether he shall kill or spare.

I see before me the gladiator lie:
He leans upon his hand — his manly brow
Consents to death, but conquers agony,
And his droop'd head sinks gradually low —
And through his side the last drops, ebbing slow
From the red gash, fall heavy, one by one,
Like the first of a thunder-shower; and now
The arena swims around him — he is gone,
Ere ceased the inhuman shout which hail'd the wretch who won.

He heard it, but he heeded not — his eyes
Were with his heart, and that was far away;
He reck'd not of the life he lost nor prize,
But where his rude hut by the Danube lay,
There were his young barbarians all at play,
There was their Dacian mother.

— Canto IV, cxl, cxli.

In those noble lines of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* Byron expresses the belief that the statue upon which he gazes is that of a Dacian from Austria, a Goth, but we now know that this is the Dying Gaul, a man from ancient Gallia, which became modern France. At the time of the Roman Empire the Britons were neighbors of the Gauls, members of the same Keltic family.

Most of us are Aryans. — Most Europeans and most Americans belong to what is called the Aryan or Indo-European race, all the members of which are supposed

to have been originally related by blood. Where the old homeland of the Aryans is, we do not know, but we do know that a branch of that race is represented by the Kelts, who at one time ruled over a fourth of Europe, from Ireland as far as the Black Sea. Traces of their influence they have left in the language and customs of France, Germany, Switzerland, and western Europe as a whole. The Christmas mistletoe and other elements in our national customs are usually regarded as of Keltic origin.



Capitoline Museum, Rome

FIG. 2. — The Dying Gaul.

The Earliest Natives of Britain. — Long before Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were born, men were living in the British Isles, but no one can tell us the name of those men. Their history is unwritten, and yet it may be read. Materials for the history of those early days have been found on waste moorlands and on beds of drained lakes, in the depths of caves and in burial mounds. Besides the ruins of Stonehenge, boats shaped by means of a stone axe, weapons of war and of the hunt, are among the relics that tell their story as plainly as a printed book. At first those people hunted the wild boar and other game of the country, but in later times they learned to be farmers as well as hunters. Doubtless they had folk dances or simple plays as well as choral songs and stories, some of which may have been handed on from father to son for many a century. Those were the people that were conquered

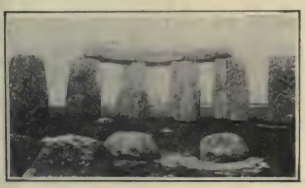


FIG. 3. — Ruins of Stonehenge.

by the Kelts, who sailed from the continent of Europe hundreds of years before the birth of Jesus.

Blending of Different Peoples. — Probably there is neither a people nor a language without foreign elements, for we are all unconsciously influenced by what we see and hear. When the Kelts conquered the aborigines of Britain, they appear to have become the aristocracy of the new country. Why should they seek to slay all or even most of the inhabitants when they could take advantage of their services? The Kelts introduced the use of metals, and they needed men to work in the tin mines of Cornwall. They used native labor also in horse and cattle breeding, in the manufacture of carts and chariots, and in many other activities. Time taught the Kelts to appreciate the merits of the original inhabitants, who gradually acquired the speech of their conquerors.

The Visits of Julius Cæsar. — In the year 55 B.C. a fleet of avenging galleys might have been seen approaching the southern seashore of Britain. Julius Cæsar was angry. Those Britons had dared to assist their kinsmen, the Gauls, in naval battles against imperial Rome, and they were now to be taught to stay at home. Their courage proved of little value against the military science of the Romans, who at that time did not attempt to conquer the country, though they invaded Britain two years in succession. In his account of those invasions Cæsar offers the opinion that in language and in customs the Britons of the coast were not unlike the tribes of Gauls nearest to Britain.

Civilization of the Early Britons. — The language of the southern Britons of Cæsar's time seems to have been the parent of Welsh and of Cornish, both of which are still spoken in western England. Welsh, Cornish, as well as Breton, which is the language of Brittany in France, are sisters, so to speak.

3. The Britons whom Cæsar saw were Kelts, much like the Dying Gaul of Byron's poem or like the forefathers of the Welsh of to-day.

4. The Roman conquest introduced writing among the Britons.

5. In the country we now call England, written literature was appreciated long before the Anglo-Saxons had arrived from Denmark and northern Germany.

Test Questions

If we forget what we read, we are wasting time, and well-spent time means more than money. Test yourself alone at home, and you will learn to be thorough in all that you undertake. If you can answer these questions, you understand this chapter. It will take only about five minutes to find out.

1. In what respects was an old Roman circus different from a circus of to-day? What circus scene did Byron have in mind when he wrote about the Dying Gaul?

2. Who conquered the earliest inhabitants of Britain? Is any tribe in the world known to be without an unwritten literature?

3. Are all Americans of the Aryan race? Where do most Aryans dwell to-day?

4. Why did Julius Cæsar invade Britain? What languages besides English are now spoken by many people in England? Did those ancient Britons know anything about art or literature?

5. Did the Romans stay long in Britain? Did they prove in any way a help to the Britons? When was writing first known in Britain?

6. Did the Anglo-Saxons leave the continent of Europe to settle in a wilderness? Why is English literature of any interest to people in America?

SUPPLEMENTARY READING

All of us have spare moments, and there is no better way to spend them than in the pursuit of knowledge and refinement. Should a public or a school library be reasonably near, form the habit of reading good books.

All volumes published abroad may be obtained through American firms such as Scribner (N. Y.), and McClurg (Chicago).

In order to gain a clearer understanding of the literary history of England, it is desirable to take note of the industrial, social, and political history presented by works like E. P. Cheyney, *Introduction to the Industrial and Social History of England*, N. Y. (Macmillan), $1.40; E. P. Cheyney, *Short History of England*, Bost. (Ginn), $1.40; S. R. Gardiner, *A Student's History of England*, N. Y. (Longmans), $3.50; J. R. Green, *Short History of the English People*, N. Y. (Macmillan), $2.50.

The following books will also be found useful:

a. For Classes

A. P. Graves, *Welsh Poetry, Old and New, in English Verse*, N. Y. (Longmans), $1.00.

E. Hull, *The Poem Book of the Gael* (translations from Irish), Chicago (Browne and Howell), $1.60.

P. W. Joyce, *The Story of Ancient Irish Civilization*, N. Y. (Longmans), $.50

D. Mitchell, *Book of Highland Verse*, Stirling (Mackay), 4*s.* 6*d.*

C. Alphonso Smith, *What can Literature do for me*, N. Y. (Doubleday), $1.00.

b. For Teachers and Others

J. R. Allen, *Celtic Art in Pagan and Christian Times*, Phila. (Jacobs), and London (Methuen), $3.00.

F. J. Haverfield, *Roman Britain*, N. Y. (Oxford Press), $1.15.

E. Hull, *Text-book of Irish Literature*, N. Y. (Benziger Bros.), 2 vols., ea. $1.30.

D. Hyde, *Literary History of Ireland*, N. Y. (Scribner's), $3.50.

J. J. Jusserand, *Literary History of the English People*, N. Y. (Putnam's), 3 vols. (Vol. I), $3.50.

A. H. Lyell, *Roman-British Architectural Remains*, N. Y. (Putnam's), $2.50.

A. S. Mackenzie, *The Evolution of Literature*, N. Y. (Crowell), $2.50.

J. Rhys, *Celtic Britain*, Lond. (Soc. for Prom. of Chris. Knowledge).

B. C. A. Windle, *Remains of the Prehistoric Age in England*, Lond. (Methuen).

CHAPTER II

THE ANGLO-SAXON PERIOD

449–1066

Europe like an Angry Sea. — Softly the evening shadows fall, and up from the shore comes the faint salt smell of the sea. Far out is the reflection of the big yellow cloud that shimmers like frosted gold upon the water. Gentle, gentle as a mother with her babe is the sea when it is quiet. A strong wind begins to whip it fiercely; then will the sleeping giant rise and rush and overwhelm.

Fifteen hundred years ago Europe was like an angry sea. Fifteen hundred years ago, along the highways they had made, could be heard the tramp of the departing legions as they left southern Britain for imperial Rome. From the east came the Slavs of Russia pressing in among the Teutonic or Germanic tribes, that in turn were clutching at the outposts of the Roman Empire. From the north and west came the people of Scotland and Ireland against the Britons that had acquired wealth and culture, and thus were the Keltic peoples of the British Isles fighting against one another.

The Anglo-Saxon Invasion. — For centuries the Romanized people of the south and east of Britain had been forbidden the use of arms. The choicest of their young men had been drafted into foreign legions to engage in fighting. Few of these young soldiers ever returned to the old homeland. Under these circumstances about the year 449 the southern Britons formed an alliance with the Angles [1] or the Saxons of

[1] The Angles, after whom Britannia was called Angle-land or England, sailed into England from Schleswig-Holstein, which until 1864 was under the crown of Denmark.

Denmark and Germany, and after them came the Jutes, another Danish tribe. At first those strangers were loyal to their pledges, but in time they turned against the unfortunate Britons, burning what they could not carry off as plunder. Priests were slain even upon the altars.



FIG. 5. — Home Lands of Anglo-Saxon Tribes.

For about half a century there was bitter warfare. "Sometimes," says Bede, "the natives, sometimes their enemies, were victorious till the year of the siege of Badon Hill (493), when they made no small slaughter of those invaders" (the Anglo-Saxons). Thereafter the Britons and the Anglo-Saxons gradually intermingled and became one people called the English. One of the romancers of the fourteenth century identifies Britons and Saxons in the line:

The Bretouns that beth Inglisse now.

1. POETRY

Folk-song. — Poetry of the people, or folk-song, is the earliest of all forms of verse. It is old, so old that no one can tell when it began to be composed. It brought joy long before professional poetry or writing was invented. Unfortunately the scant remains of Anglo-Saxon folk-song have been so polished by the professional poets and by the monks that we can merely try to imagine how it sounded as the country people chanted it in the fields or on the village green. The nearest approach to folk-song is found among the charms or magic verses.

Magic Verses. — Here is the modern version of a bit of magic lore, not unlike some of the charms or spells that still survive in a few parts of Europe and America.

Charm for Swarming Bees

Take earth, throw it with thy right hand under thy right foot, and say:

"Take I under foot, I have found it.
Lo! may earth avail against every creature,
And against enmity and against spite,
And against the big tongue of man."

Throw earth upon them when they swarm, and say:

"Sit ye, victory-women; sink to earth,
Never fly ye wild to the wood!
Be ye as thoughtful of my good
As every man is of food and property."

Traditional Poetry. — Besides traces of folk-verse, the Anglo-Saxons by oral tradition inherited poetry which takes us back in imagination to the continent of Europe. With one or two exceptions there is no reference in this group of poetry to persons of English nationality. For instance, in the story of *Waldere*, which resembles a German-Latin poem, the hero and heroine belong to Gaul. In the story

of *Finn*, who was king of the Frisians, we read about trouble with the Danes. The *Elegy of Deor*, usually called *Deor's Lament*, resembles an old poem of Iceland. It is mainly concerned with the Goths.

Widsith. — The poem called *Widsith*, which means Farway or Far-Travelled, was written down by an English monk about the year 1100. It is probably the work of a seventh-century poet or gleeman who made use of the traditions of ancient Angel, the continental home of the Angles, in Denmark. The gleeman professes to tell of the tribes among which he has sojourned and the chieftains whom he has known. The heroes that are mentioned lived from the third to the sixth century, every one of them prior to the conversion of the Anglo-Saxons to Christianity. Most scholars are of the opinion that *Widsith* is the oldest Anglo-Saxon poem in existence.

Beowulf Slays the Water-Monsters. — The *Beowulf*, an epic poem which contains over three thousand lines, has its opening scene in Denmark, whereas the hero, after whom the poem is named, is from the south of Sweden. Here is an outline of the *Beowulf*, which may be taken as the type of heroic or traditional poetry. Hrothgar, king of the Danes, has built a splendid hall. In it he finds but little pleasure because of the unceasing ravages of a water-monster named Grendel, who steals into the hall by night, eating up those men whom he can find. Beowulf, a nephew of the king of the Geats, a people of southern Sweden, hears of the trouble in Denmark. The young hero sails across to the island of Zealand, and destroys both the monster and his avenging mother. After receiving rewards from the Danish monarch, the young man returns north to his homeland.

Many years pass. Beowulf's royal uncle has perished in a fight abroad, and the old man's son has been slain by the Swedes. Beowulf then succeeds to the throne and reigns

a long time. In his old age he hears of a vast treasure of gold and jewels, guarded by a fire breathing dragon. In spite of the cowardice of his followers, most of whom desert him, he destroys the dragon, though in doing so he is mortally wounded.

Longfellow's Translation. — In his *Poets and Poetry of Europe* Longfellow gives the following version of Beowulf's voyage to Denmark:

Then went over the sea-waves,
Hurried by the wind,
The ship with foamy neck,
Most like a sea-fowl,
Till about one hour
Of the second day
The curved prow
Had passed onward
So that the sailors
The land saw,
The shore-cliffs shining,
Mountains steep,
And broad sea-noses.
Then was the sea-sailing
Of the Earl at an end.

Heroic Poetry is Aristocratic. — Heroic poems such as the *Beowulf* are aristocratic in origin. They flourish at the court of kings, because there a professional minstrel can enjoy the leisure necessary to compose a long narrative in choice words. All the women are of royal birth, while the men are either princes or chiefs. If at rare intervals a person of lowly rank is introduced, his name is not mentioned. There is plenty of fighting, but never a word that could not be used in polite society. Dignity of thought and simplicity of style make up much of the charm to be found in the oldest epic preserved in England.

The Popular Element in Court Poetry. — In large measure the Anglo-Saxons had risen above the primitive culture of their forefathers, but myth-making survives even among ourselves. For instance, Beowulf's adventures with the monster appear to be derived from a folk-tale after the type of Jack the Giant-killer, who is also a favorite among the Zulus of South Africa. Tales of this kind were popular enough in Norway. Indeed the ancient god Thor, whose name, as we all know, is preserved in the word Thursday, came to be regarded as little more than a giant-killer. And yet when the poet drew the portrait of Beowulf, he had a historical person in view. The hero is a real man, sane and life-like. Stories clustered about him as they now cluster about distinguished men who have become popular heroes. To the people of those days the water-monsters seemed much more real than the sea-serpent, of which we read now and again in our own newspapers. Love of romance, longing for what is wonderful, the desire for thrills, is deeply rooted in human nature, asserting itself at all stages of civilization and in every rank of society.



Cotton MS.

FIG. 6. — Anglo-Saxon Gleemen.

Authorship of the Beowulf. — If we desire to be fair in judging any work of art, we must take into account the time

of its composition. The name of the man who wrote the *Beowulf* in its final form has been forgotten, but from the style of his penmanship it is generally believed that he lived in the tenth century. In its present form the poem cannot be older than the seventh century, for it contains many expressions of Christian sentiment. No doubt short heroic lays or ballads are earlier than the epics of any country, for all that any poet can hope to do is to improve upon his predecessors. The thane who celebrated Beowulf's exploit is said to have had a memory stored with songs, and he remembered many old stories.

The *Beowulf*, however, is not simply a collection of oral poems. The hand of one man is visible throughout. The poet who gave unity to this epic is the man who is entitled to the credit of authorship, even if he found all the literary material at his hand. True it is that the poem had to be adapted for recitation before the clergy, but the man or men who inserted the Christian allusions did not alter the scope and purpose of the poem. Rather he or they took advantage of its dignity and seriousness in order to present the new religion in the framework of a proud antiquity. In short, it is not too much to say that Latin education and heroic or traditional poetry are the two features that distinguish the Anglo-Saxon period from all others.

The Nature of Anglo-Saxon Verse. — For reasons best known to themselves our Saxon ancestors preferred metaphor to simile. Anglo-Saxon verse lacks the smooth cadence of modern poetry, although one may acquire a real liking for its rugged vigor. Alliteration takes the place of what we call rime or end-rime. Each line is in two parts, and as a rule there are four stresses or accents, the first three beginning with the same letter of the alphabet. Here is a quotation:

> Fērdon folctogan feorran nēan.
> Came the folk-leaders from far and near.

Besides accent and alliteration the Anglo-Saxons, like the Scandinavians and Germans, were fond of parallelism, which is so common in the Old Testament. Parallelism is merely a repetition of the thought in different words, and it serves to deepen the impression of the thought upon the mind.

Historical Poetry. — Poetry of the people, or folk-verse, belongs to the common people, traditional or heroic poetry belongs mainly to the nobility and gentry, whereas historical poetry is for the whole nation. Historical poetry of the Anglo-Saxons, composed later than either folk-verse or traditional poetry, is the only type that professes to deal with the national events of England. Metre and language are much the same as before, but the poet's point of view has changed. The historical poems are concerned with the glory of the nation rather than with that of royalty.

Historical Themes. — The earliest and most important of the historical poems is dated 937, and records the victory at Brunanburh of the West Saxons and Mercians of England over the Scots of the north as well as the Danes who had settled in Ireland. The longest poem in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle tells of the battle of Maldon, in which the East-Saxons in the year 991 were defeated by the Norsemen, whose leader is celebrated in Longfellow's *Saga of King Olaf.*

Tennyson's Version. — Anlaf, theDanish leader, was a son-in-law of the king of the Scots. They had invaded England. In this extract from Tennyson's spirited version of the *Battle of Brunanburh* notice how the modern poet employs "apt alliteration's artful aid."

> We, the West-Saxons,
> Long as the daylight
> Lasted, in companies
> Troubled the track of the host that we hated.
> Grimly with swords that were sharp from the grindstone,
> Fiercely we hack'd at the flyers before us.

Mighty the Mercian,
Hard was his hand-play,
Sparing not any of
Those that with Anlaf,
Warriors over the
Weltering waters
Borne in the bark's-bosom,
Drew to this island:
Doom'd to the death.

Five young kings put asleep by the sword-stroke,
Seven young Earls of the army of Anlaf
Fell on the war-field, numberless numbers,
Shipmen and Scotsmen.

Religious Poetry. A School of the Seventh Century. — What sort of life did a boy lead in one of the early schools of England and Ireland? The teachers were monks, and they kept their pupils busy in and around the monastery. Among other subjects those lads had to master lessons in reading, writing, spelling, grammar, poetry, history, and Latin. They were also obliged to attend church services and to take a hand in agriculture and manual training. The monks and students alike ploughed and reaped, baked the bread, and cooked the meals. Even the bishops at times did not disdain to work with their hands. As the schools grew larger the work was divided. Most of the manual labor was performed by the lay brethren, while the monks devoted themselves to teaching and preaching. Idleness was considered to be the great enemy of the soul.

Cædmon at the Festival (670?). — It is in connection with such a school that we find the earliest historical reference to minstrelsy in England. The historian Bede is telling about the poet Cædmon, one of the lay brethren at Whitby. When the villagers of northeastern England meet together to amuse themselves, every one is expected to take his turn

in singing to the harp. About the year 670 Cædmon, who has never been able either to improvise or to learn a song, is in the habit of leaving the festivals for his home as soon as he sees the harp coming in his direction. Some of these songs may have been short, perhaps not much longer than the hymn learned by Cædmon from the angel, which contains only nine lines.

Cædmon's Dream. — As he lies asleep, in a dream some one stands by him and says, " Cædmon, sing me something." To this he replies, " I know not how to sing, and that is the very reason why I left the festival and came here." But the one who is talking with him answers, " No matter, you are to sing for me." " Well, then," saith he, " what is it that I must sing? " " Sing," quoth the other, " the beginning of things created." At this response he immediately begins to sing verses in praise of God the Creator, verses that he has never heard before.

Cædmon's Hymn

Now let us laud the Lord of heaven's realm,
The might of the maker, the plan of his mind,
The Father's enactments. He, Lord everlasting,
Ordained from of old each and every marvel.
He, the Holy Creator, first fashioned the heaven,
Like to a ceiling, o'er the children of earth.
The Lord everlasting in later time fashioned
All mother-earth as a floor for mankind —
He, Guardian of kinsfolk, the Almighty King.

This lyric effort so surprised Cædmon's monastic superiors that they began to educate him thoroughly in the Scriptures. Subsequently he is said to have composed poems upon Genesis and similar topics.

Minstrels of the Seventh Century. — The preceding story from Bede goes to show that in Cædmon's time minstrelsy of some kind was cultivated even by amateurs among the

people. Apparently there were also professional minstrels, if we may accept a well-known story about Aldhelm, the English bishop. He used to take up his position on a bridge, like a professional minstrel, and sing to the people in order to coax them to the church services.

A Letter of the Eighth Century

Let the words of God be read at a priestly festival. On such an occasion it is seemly to listen to a reader, not to a lute-player; to the discourses of the Fathers, not the poems of foreigners. What has Ingeld to do with Christ? Strait is the house; it will not be able to hold them both.



Cotton MS.

FIG. 7. — Players on the Lute and on the Double Flute Dancing.

The King of heaven does not wish to have fellowship with so-called kings who are heathen and lost; for the one King reigns eternal in the sky, the other, the lost heathen, laments in the place below. In your houses the voices of those who read should be heard, not a mob of those that are laughing in the streets.

These words are in a Latin letter written in 797 by Alcuin, the most noted teacher of his time. Evidently at the close of the eighth century the clergy knew of songs dealing with a certain king named Ingeld, one of the minor characters in *Beowulf*. As a matter of fact, the countries of northern Europe had a class of minstrels who used to play the harp and recite heroic verses in village streets, or wherever they could attract a crowd.

The Secular Element. — After the Anglo-Saxons had settled in their new island home, they began to lose interest in the gods of their ancestors. Missionaries from Ireland, from Iona in Scotland, and from Rome taught them to reverence the God whom we worship. These good men were apt to regard all secular songs as trivial or worldly, and therefore unworthy of being put on record for future generations. At a time when only the clergy could write, it was natural that they should feel keenest interest in religious poetry.



Dublin Museum

FIG. 8. — Shrine of St. Patrick's Bell.

We are all aware that Anglo-Saxon literature was composed under the stress of almost constant warfare, by a people whose conversion to Christianity was comparatively recent. The religious poets do not hesitate to apply the phrases of heroic verse to the peaceful journeys of apostles. The fighting temper was merely disguised by Christianity, and the clergy had troubles of their own — a feeling of the approach of the Day of Doom with all its tragedy.

The So-called Cædmonian Poems. — Just as there was at one time a close connection between public worship and

the drama, so there is a relationship between the church calendar and the religious poetry. For a long time Cædmon was supposed to have written other poems known as *Genesis, Exodus, Daniel,* and *Christ and Satan.* To-day the general belief is that no one man wrote the four poems, and that it is doubtful if Cædmon composed any part of them. Whether they are Cædmon's or not, it is scarcely fair to describe them as paraphrases of Scripture, for they exhibit no little originality.

What are Runes? — In reading Anglo-Saxon literature we occasionally come across runes. Runic writing is a modification of the Latin alphabet. Marks that are not understood are mysterious, and so these strange symbols were called runes, which is simply the Anglo-Saxon word *rūn,* meaning mystery or secret. Runes were forbidden by the church because of their connection with heathen magic, and we now employ the Roman or Latin alphabet in ordinary penmanship and printing.

A Scottish Runic Cross. — A few miles away from the Solway Firth you can see the spot where John Paul Jones, the noted sea-fighter of the American Revolution, first looked into his mother's eyes. On mossy ground the white tufts of cotton-grass bow to the breeze. Yonder, under the clear green sky, glistens the treacherous silver of the Solway Firth, on whose southern shore lies England. We are in the parish of Ruthwell on the Dumfriesshire coast. About eighteen feet into the air rises a cross of sandstone, chiselled with ornamental designs. Carved upon it is an inscription in the Roman alphabet and in runes. The mason who carved these runes has been dead for nearly a thousand years.

The Dream of the Cross. — The date and authorship of the *Dream of the Cross* are unknown, though the poem may belong to the eighth or ninth century. The poet is not describing the Ruthwell cross, which is of later date than the poem.

He tells of a glorified cross which he beholds in a midnight vision, the cross upon which Jesus was crucified. After a long time he hears the cross giving utterance to its own story, parts of which are similar to the runic inscription of the Scottish border. This is part of the passage that resembles the runes of Ruthwell:

> Then the youthful Hero girt Himself about,
> He that was God Almighty, strong and firm;
> Bravely in sight of many did He ascend
> The cross exalted, when He would free mankind.
> Then, when the Hero clasped me, I did quiver;
> Yet I durst not bend toward the ground nor fall
> Unto the earth, but I must needs stand fast.
> A cross raised up, rich was the King I lifted,
> Lifted the Lord of heaven; and durst not lean.
> Dark were the nails that darted through me; visible
> Upon me still are scars, the wounds of sin,
> Yet durst I not disable one of them.
> They taunted us both together: then was I
> Bedewed with blood that burst forth from this Hero's side,
> When finally He forth His spirit breathed.

The Keltic Element in Anglo-Saxon Literature. — To what extent did the Kelts influence Anglo-Saxon literature? The question is not likely to receive a final answer for some time to come. The Anglo-Saxons were settled among a powerful group of Keltic peoples. Occupying the southern part of a comparatively small island, the inhabitants of England were partly Kymric or Briton and partly Saxon, and doubtless some of the clergy and writers were of Kelto-Saxon descent. Irish and Scots missionaries, all of them Kelts, founded monasteries and taught throughout England and Europe.

More imaginative, more emotional, more playful, more sensitive to the hidden aspects of life, is Keltic literature than Anglo-Saxon. In spite of its tragic theme the *Dream of the Cross* has less gloom and greater variety of thought and style

than *Beowulf*. The *Dream* reveals a radiance in the gloom, a grace of fancy, that may have sprung from Keltic sources.

Cynewulf's Works. — Next to the unknown author of the *Beowulf*, the ablest of the Anglo-Saxon poets is Cynewulf, who was born about the middle of the eighth century. It is evident that he had ideas of his own, for he was the only one of the early poets who signed his compositions. His name is ingeniously woven into the verses in runes. He may have written other poems, but those that are signed are *Juliana*, *The Fates of the Apostles*, *Elene*, and the *Christ*.

Cynewulf must have been a man of liberal views, for runes were under suspicion. In the popular mind they were linked with the black magic of witchcraft. Moreover, he appears to have been familiar with the old heroic poetry, for like the early heroes of his race he was anxious not to be forgotten. In Cynewulf's works the older heathen fatalism makes way for the good news of the new religion, but there is still a haunting echo of the epic lilt and heroic pomp of bygone days. Though they were written in the cloister, there remains enough of the world in them to show that he had not forgotten the ideals of traditional poetry. It is the atmosphere of medieval legend that we breathe when we begin to read *Juliana*, *The Fates of the Apostles*, and *Elene*, whereas the *Christ* treats of the birth and the ascension, as well as doomsday, or the day of judgment.

Birds of the Poets. — The animals of Anglo-Saxon poetry, real or fanciful, are of profound interest, and this is especially true of the birds. We hear the cuckoo foretelling sorrow, the sweet plaintive notes of the nightingale, the wild swan flying high over the village, the wail of the water-hen, the hoarse cries of the sea-gull and the sea-swallow. Again and again we listen to the scream of the eagle swooping down from the rocky cliff, and we watch the hawk and the raven hovering over the silent figures of the battlefield. 'Tis only

in the religious poems that we behold the gentle dove preening her feathers. Through the Kelts came knowledge of the high-bred falcon, but the phœnix came from the Romans.

Far away in the east lies a peerless island, in whose forest dwells a bird of entrancing beauty. Once every thousand years he flies westward to a tree where he builds a nest. He permits himself to be burned therein, rising again from the ashes, young and vigorous. This is one of the forms of a myth concerning the phœnix, typical of man's craving for eternal youth. Coins of the early Christian emperors were often stamped with an image of the phœnix, which was at first an emblem of sun-worship, the memory of which is kept green by our word Sunday. This wondrous creature passed from the old to the new religion, and has been celebrated in many a song and many a sermon.

The Classical Element in Anglo-Saxon Poetry. — Based upon the Latin is an allegorical poem or poetic sermon called *The Phœnix*, consisting of nearly seven hundred lines. Though the date and authorship are unknown, its author evidently made use of several classical poems. All scholars of those days wrote and spoke Latin, as they did for centuries later, and the classic influence has put its color even into parts of the *Beowulf*.

The first part of *The Phœnix* is a description of the bird and its habits, while the second part is an application of its fabulous qualities to the doctrine of the resurrection. This old English poem may go into too much detail for a busy age like ours, yet it glows with the lustre of classical imagery. Opening his own heart at times, the poet sets forth ideals that may never perish, and ideals have touched and taught the world more than have facts.

2. PROSE

Who was Gildas (516?–570)? — The earliest extant record of Britain was written by Gildas. Bede was the first of Anglo-Saxon prose writers, but most of what he knew concerning fifth-century Britain is derived from *The Ruin of Britannia*, which deals with that part of Britain inhabited by the Britons or Welsh. Written about the year 548, this work was penned in Latin by Gildas, who relied to some extent upon native traditions.

Gildas, the best-known churchman of his time, appears to have been the son of a king in Alcylde, now named Dumbarton, in the south of Scotland. Bede quotes freely from Gildas, who was far from pleased with the spiritual state of the Britons, his fellow-countrymen. The date of the death of Gildas is usually given as 570, which is about the time of the birth of Mohammed in Arabia.



FIG. 9. — Dumbarton Castle.

The King and the Beggars. — For sixteen long years Oswald, king of Northumbria, the northeastern province of England, had been an exile in the little Scottish isle of Iona. From that seat of learning he welcomed Bishop Aidan and other missionaries to his kingdom. One Easter day the king was sitting at dinner with the bishop, and on the table was a silver dish full of dainties. Word was brought to the king that a number of starving people were waiting outside for alms.

At once he sent food to them, ordering that the silver dish should be broken and divided among them. This is only one of many fine stories recorded by Bede, who was by far the most illustrious man of the seventh century.

Bede's Church History. — It is difficult to realize the genius of a man who in those early days could write about forty volumes. He wrote mostly in Latin, for in that way he was sure of having his works understood by learned men of any European country. It is his *Church History of England* that entitles him to a place in English Literature, for without it two or three centuries would be almost a blank. His real purpose was to write the history of Christianity in England, but the book gives many a picture of the everyday life of the people. Bede spent most of his life in the monastery at Jarrow. He took a great interest in the common people, and chose the message of love contained in the Gospel of St. John for translation into Anglo-Saxon, the language of the people. What a pity that this work has perished! Bede was sixty-two years old when he died in 735, respected and beloved by everybody.

The Saxon Chronicles. — Seven manuscripts of the Saxon or Anglo-Saxon chronicles have been preserved, the Winchester chronicle being generally regarded as the oldest. They are based upon earlier chronicles, which were combined and expanded under the supervision of King Alfred. The entries begin with the year 60 B.C. and end with the year 1154 A.D. The annals of the earlier centuries seem to have been inserted in the time of Alfred, who probably desired to make the annals national in scope rather than local. From his time onward until the twelfth century, the historical notes were made independently at different monasteries.

Some of these records represent the oldest extant specimens of Anglo-Saxon prose, while those of the tenth century include poems like the *Battle of Brunanburh*. The following

entry, besides being of interest from a naval point of view, may give an idea of the style of the *Chronicles*.



From the Bayeux Tapestry

FIG. 10. — Ship of Alfred's Time.

A.D. 897. That same year (Danish) troops from among the East Anglians and from among the Northumbrians greatly troubled the land of the West Saxons, on the south coast, with plundering bands, most of all with the ash-skiffs which they many years before had constructed. Then King Alfred gave orders to construct long ships against the ash-skiffs; they were almost twice as long as the others; some had sixty oars, others more; they were both swifter and steadier and higher, too, than the others; they were modeled neither on Frisian nor on Danish lines, but as it seemed to him that they could be of most avail. . . . But two of them (Danes) there the sea cast ashore, and the men were taken to Winchester to the king, and there he gave orders to hang them.

Alfred the Great (849–901). — With a gallant company of sportsmen the king is cantering over rustling leaves, white

and crisp with October frost, on the way home from the lonely haunts of grouse and heron, red deer and wild boar. It is at the monastery that they now draw rein, and the king enters to examine a rare manuscript which recently was brought by a pilgrim from Italy. Glance for a moment at those sedate monks, some toiling at the furnace, others using graving-tool or paint brush. They are creating the choicest of bells, jewelry, stained glass, and illuminated manuscripts. But this is merely the sunny side of the life of Alfred the Great. Long hung the war-clouds over England, and the wonder is that the royal warrior should have had either time or taste for the higher things of life. Over a thousand years have passed since Alfred was laid to rest with his kinsmen, yet he still ranks as one of the noblest figures in English history.



From engraving by Vertue

FIG. 11. — King Alfred.

He Prepares Books for his People. — The king recognized that all countries may learn much from each other, and he encouraged foreigners to visit his court. In order that his beloved people might enjoy some of the wisdom of the past, he and his associates translated several great books from Latin into the language of England. One of these, dealing with the art of teaching, was called the *Pastoral Care*, written by Pope Gregory the Great, who had done so much for Eng-

land. Another was a history of the world by a Spaniard named Orosius. A third was a famous work called the *Consolation of Philosophy*, composed by a Roman consul named Boethius, while he was in prison. A fourth was Bede's history of England. The fifth was *Soliloquies*, or thoughts of St. Augustine, a native of Numidia, which is nearly the same as Algeria, in North Africa. We must take care not to confuse him with the missionary who went from Italy to England in 597.

Alfred's translations are not slavish copies of the original, but contain independent matter, the prefaces being enlivened with personal allusions. Most of this work is supposed to have been done during the ten or twelve years before Alfred's death, which occurred in 901.

Three Causes of Literary Change. — Changes in the style and thought of literature are usually so gradual that it is hard to tell when, where, and why they occurred. Nevertheless there are good reasons for believing that the changes in Anglo-Saxon literature were brought about by three main causes — Keltic, Latin, and Danish.

Reference has already been made to Keltic and Latin influence upon the church, which in turn affected society. Not only were the Gaels or Kelts of Scotland and Ireland teaching in England for centuries, but Bede points out that as early as the seventh century many of the English nobility and gentry crossed to Ireland in order to study at different institutions of learning.

In that same seventh century Englishwomen went to Gaul for instruction, because the French monasteries had superior facilities for women's education. Before the eighth century England possessed some fine libraries, most of whose manuscripts were written in Latin, opening up a new world of thought. It is impossible for us to believe that Latin could be the international language of Europe as well as the chief

language of the Church, and yet leave no impress upon Anglo-Saxon literature.

Danish Influence. — The third main cause of change in the course of the development of Anglo-Saxon literature was Danish or Scandinavian. Scandinavia, as we all remember, is the name commonly applied to Norway and Sweden, whose people are much the same as those of Denmark. For over two hundred and fifty years, from the eighth to the eleventh century, the Danes, joined later by the Norwegians or Norsemen, left their mark upon the British Isles and upon every shore of Europe. The ablest seamen in Europe, they took summer trips to England for the sake of adventure. Those visits led to permanent settlements in the north and midlands, and so successful were they that in the eleventh century Danish kings reigned over England.

Those sea-rovers or vikings looted the churches and monasteries, burned the libraries, slew the abbots and monks, and brought about the decay of learning. Some of their words became a part of the English language, and the Northmen's descendants are in England to this day.

Ælfric (955?–1020?). — Besides religious works and translations, Anglo-Saxon prose includes biographical, medical, and other scientific manuscripts as well as legal and other documents. Ælfric was born about 955 and died subsequent to 1020. Educated at Winchester, he became the best prose writer of his time, producing many sermons or *Homilies* as well as text-books for the use of boys in the schools.

Wulfstan (died 1023). — For years Ælfric and Wulfstan labored earnestly for the betterment of education and religion in England. An extract from a discourse, delivered in 1014, may serve as a specimen of Wulfstan's style, and illustrate Danish influence in England.

England and the Danes

For a long time now it has not been good for us at home or abroad, but there have been a (Danish) army and hatred on every side time and again, and the English now for a long time without victory and too greatly disheartened through God's anger, and the shipmen (Danes) so strong through God's sanction that often in fight one puts to flight ten, and two often twenty, all on account of our sins. . . . And often a thrall forcibly ties fast the thane who before was his lord, and makes him as a thrall through God's anger. Often two seamen (Danes) or three drive the droves of Christian men, from sea to sea out through this nation, bound together to the worldly shame of us all, if we in earnest knew any shame. But all the disgrace, that we often endure, we repay with homage to those that shame us. We give to them continually, and they humiliate us daily. They harry and they burn, rob and ravage, and take aboard.

SUMMARY

1. In the fifth century the Slavs, represented to-day chiefly by the Russians, Poles, and Bulgars, were pushing the Teutonic or Germanic tribes westward, and these in turn were pushing in upon the Roman Empire. Thus came the Anglo-Saxon invasion of England in 449. Some of the poetry of the Anglo-Saxons was composed and sung by the common people. This folk-verse, or poetry of the people, comprises charms or magic verses, and other simple forms of poetry.

2. Another type of Anglo-Saxon verse is traditional poetry, which, like folk-verse, was at first not written but remembered, and passed on from one generation to another. The best specimen is the *Beowulf*, which tells about the exploits of a Swedish hero in Denmark and in his homeland.

3. A third kind of verse is known as historical poetry. Traditional poetry was chiefly for people of high rank, whereas historical poetry is for everybody, rich or poor.

It is the earliest national poetry of England, and is well represented by such works as the *Battle of Brunanburh,* the story of a conflict in 937.

4. A fourth kind of verse is religious poetry, which was due to the influence of the new Christian religion. The two representative poets of this class are Cædmon of the seventh century and Cynewulf of the eighth.

5. Runes belong principally to the Anglo-Saxons and Scandinavians. There is a runic inscription on the Ruthwell Cross, which stands near the border of Scotland and England. The *Dream of the Cross* is a poem that must have been known by the man who had the runes carved upon the Scottish cross.

6. The clergy were the only people that knew enough to be able to teach. Through the church the later literature was modified by Keltic and classical influence. For instance, *The Phœnix* and other works were borrowed direct from Latin literature.

7. Prose written by a native of Britain begins with Gildas, who was not an Anglo-Saxon but a Keltic Briton. English history of the fifth century is mainly based upon his *Ruin of Britannia,* written in Latin.

8. The oldest specimens of Anglo-Saxon prose are in the *Saxon Chronicles,* which were penned in different monasteries for hundreds of years.

9. Alfred wrote more Anglo-Saxon prose than any one before his time. He wished to have his people able to read their own language, and he translated foreign books.

10. From the eighth to the eleventh century the influence of the Danes was hurtful to the progress of Anglo-Saxon literature, because they burned the libraries and had little or no respect for education.

Test Questions

1. What is poetry of the people?
2. To what type of poetry does the *Beowulf* belong? Tell the story of this epic in your own words. If the poem was at first a heathen one, why does it mention Christianity?
3. What are the three peculiarities of Anglo-Saxon poetry?
4. Distinguish between traditional and historical poetry. Illustrate.
5. What was Cædmon's dream? Do you remember anything about the Cædmonian poems?
6. What is the connection between the Ruthwell Cross and the *Dream of the Cross?*
7. Name one or more of the signed poems of Cynewulf, and state why their author seems to have been liberal-minded.
8. Can you recall any birds of Anglo-Saxon poetry? Why was the bird-poem called *The Phœnix* written?
9. What is the relation of Bede to Gildas?
10. How did Alfred increase the value of the *Saxon Chronicles?* Why was he so anxious for translations from Latin? Name any book in which he was interested.
11. Two things strengthened and one thing weakened the life of Anglo-Saxon literature. What were they?

SUPPLEMENTARY READING

a. For Classes

W. C. Bronson, *English Poems* (Old and Middle English Periods), Chicago (Univ. of Chic. Press), $1.00.

A. S. Cook and C. B. Tinker, *Select Translations from Old English Poetry*, Boston (Ginn), $1.00.

A. S. Cook and C. B. Tinker, *Select Trans. from O. E. Prose*, Boston (Ginn), $1.25.

G. E. and W. H. Hadow, *Oxford Treasury of English Literature*, 3 vols., N. Y. (Oxford Press), $.90 each.

A. G. Newcomer and A. E. Andrews, *Twelve Centuries of English Poetry and Prose*, Chic. (Scott, Foresman), $1.75.

V. D. Scudder, *Bede's Ecclesiastical History*, N. Y. (Dutton), $.35.

F. J. Snell, *The Age of Alfred*, N. Y. (Macmillan), $1.00.

A. Zimmern, *Gods and Heroes of the North*, N. Y. (Longmans), $.30.

b. For Teachers and Others

S. A. Brooke, *History of Early English Literature*, N. Y. (Macmillan), $2.50.

H. M. Chadwick, *The Heroic Age*, N. Y. (Putnam's), $4.00.

R. W. Chambers, *Widsith*, N. Y. (Putnam's), $1.50.

E. E. C. Gomme, *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, N. Y. (Macmillan), $2.00.

F. B. Gummere, *Oldest English Epic*, N. Y. (Macmillan), Translations of *Beowulf*, *Widsith*, etc., $1.10.

D. A. Mackenzie, *Teutonic Myth and Legend*, Lond. (Gresham).

W. J. Sedgefield, *Beowulf*, 2d ed., N. Y. (Longmans), A. S. text, with notes, etc., $3.00.

H. A. Taine, *History of English Literature*, N. Y. (Holt), 4 vols., $6.00. Abridged edition at $1.40.

B. ten Brink, *Early English Literature*, N. Y. (Holt), vol. I to Wyclif; vol. II, pt. i, Wyclif to Renaissance; vol. II, pt. ii, to accession of Elizabeth; $2.00 each.

A. W. Ward and A. R. Waller, *Cambridge History of English Literature*, N. Y. (Putnam's), 9 vols., $2.50 ea.

CHAPTER III

THE NORMAN-ENGLISH PERIOD

1066–1300

The Normans in England. — It was in the eleventh century that for the fourth and last time England was invaded and occupied by strangers. Not to speak of the prehistoric people, whose real name we do not know, the Kelts, the Anglo-Saxons, the Danes, and the Normans have all mingled to form the English-speaking nations of the world. Gaul of the Roman Empire became France, after it fell into the hands of Teutonic or Germanic tribes, chief of whom were the Franks. The northern Gauls and Franks, now called French, were overpowered by bands of sea-rovers, mostly from Norway. When these Northmen intermarried with the French, they came to be known as Normans. The Normans, like the Franks, lost their own language, and adopted that of the old Gauls and Romans. Thus when William of Normandy became king of England in 1066, he and his men used the French language.

French and English Literature. — The map of Europe shows that the whole southern coast of England faces the whole northern coast of France, and they are near one another. From Cæsar's time onward we know that England was always more or less under the influence of France. For two thousand years these countries have sometimes helped each other, sometimes hindered, the relationship being clearly reflected in the literature of both.

In 1042 Edward the Confessor was on the English throne,

and he had a kindly feeling for Normandy, the land in which he lived during boyhood. High positions he gave to French nobles and priests, and the language of the English court was French. All this, however, had little effect upon the English people as a whole, though it accustomed them to the sounds of a foreign language. Gradually, a fashionable mode of speech is bound to affect the speech of the people. Thus in time the Norman conquest broadened the thought, enlarged the vocabulary, and polished the diction of the English nation.

Norman-English Society. — All the literature of the world is social in origin. That is to say, it is composed by people who belong to a community of some sort. Hence we can scarcely appreciate the difference between Norman-English literature and the literature of to-day, until we are familiar with the society wherein the former was created. Men write about what they feel or think. The Norman-English writers may have had some thoughts which they did not dare express, and others which they felt they must express.

The Feudal System. — One vital feature of Norman-English society was Feudalism. It existed in England long before the Norman conquest, although its existence did not greatly annoy the common people. Alfred, for instance, made a treaty with the Danes, whereby as his vassals the Danes received East Anglia and other lands. A vassal holds land so long as he satisfies the real lord or landowner. A vassal renders military service to his superior and receives protection when it is needed. Thus feudalism is a social system in which lands, called feuds, are in the hands of warriors. After the conquest in 1066 William of Normandy claimed all the folkland, or public land, as the property of the crown. All other land was given by him to Norman gentlemen as vassals of the king.

The Crusades. — One of the causes that helped to modify the feudal system was the series of religious wars, called the Crusades, carried on for two centuries between Christians and Mohammedans. Those who determined to set out for the Holy Land wore on their breast the figure of a red cross. This is why they were called Crusaders. At first the Christians demanded only free admission to the Holy Sepulchre, but afterward the contest was for the possession of Jerusalem, a purpose that was purely sentimental in its beginning.

It was in 1095, less than thirty years after the Norman Conquest, that the first of the seven crusades began. Most European countries were involved, and millions of men, women, and children sacrificed their lives for the sake of an ideal. Many estates had to be sold to merchants in exchange for money required by the nobles who were engaged in fighting in the East, and this tended to weaken the feudal system. Above all, the travel abroad awoke more liberal ways of thinking, and thus brought a new spirit into the literature of England and other countries.

Chivalry. — The French-speaking people played the chief part in the crusades and in the institution of Chivalry. Today chivalry implies courteous manners, deference to women of any rank or age, and readiness from a sense of fair play to protect those who are too weak to defend themselves against injustice. It had its birth in the feudal mansion when a young man was formally admitted to the rank of warrior and bound himself to his feudal superior — his lord — who conferred upon him the arms of knighthood.

It was during the crusades that chivalry became linked with the solemn ceremonies of religion. Loyalty to one's promise, courtesy even toward an enemy, gallantry in the protection of womanhood, and personal courage were the principal features of a system which certainly helped to promote refinement and a sense of honor among all gentle-

men worthy of the name. It was such a gentleman that risked his life in behalf of Rebecca, the Jewess, whom Scott depicts in *Ivanhoe*. For centuries knightly heroes and their deeds formed the subject of all the most popular works of poetry and romance.

The Seaport of Tyre. — High up in its solitude, pure and lustrous like a cloud steeped in sunshine, stands Lebanon,



FIG. 12. — Seaport of Tyre.

the emblem of that old oriental world within whose shadow lies the site of Tyre, by the eastern waters of the Mediterranean Sea. Many a giant cedar of Lebanon was felled by woodmen of Tyre for the temple of King Solomon. The ruins of an old church, some tottering walls and towers, a white-domed mosque, a few fishermen's houses clinging to

the sea-washed rock, some palm-trees mourning, as it were, over bygone splendor, are all that now remain of a mighty city whose "merchants were princes."

A Greek Romance. — During the Norman-English period Greek influenced the literature of western Europe either through Latin culture or through saints' legends, fables, and romances brought back by travellers and traders. A metrical Greek romance, *Apollonius of Tyre*, was at one time so popular that it was translated into most of the languages of Europe. It is on this romance that the Shakespearean play of *Pericles*, Prince of Tyre, is founded.

The Anglo-Saxon version, of which only a fragment has been preserved, was made from Latin about the year 1100. Like the Latin version, it not only introduces Christian ideas, but changes the plot of the romance. The story consists of the adventures of Apollonius, a Syrian prince, who is shipwrecked not far from a great city, which stands near the southern coast of the Mediterranean. All his comrades are lost. The hero makes his way to the city gates, wins the favor of the king, and finally marries the king's daughter.

The following scene may serve to illustrate the style of the Saxon version:

The King's Daughter

Then suddenly the king's young daughter entered and kissed her father and those about him. When she came to Apollonius, she turned toward her father and said: "Good king and dearest father, who is this young man that sitteth over against thee in so honorable a place with a countenance so sorrowful? I know not why he sorroweth." Then said the king: "Daughter dear, the young man has been shipwrecked, and he has pleased me best of all in the games to-day, therefore I invited him to this our banquet. I know neither who he is nor whence he is, but if thou wilt know who he is, ask him, for it is proper that thou know."

Then went the maiden to Apollonius, and with hesitancy

said: "Though thou be silent and disheartened, yet I perceive thy nobility, so now if it seem not burdensome to thee, tell me thy name and relate to me thy misfortunes." Then said Apollonius: "If thou needs must inquire about my name, I answer that I lost it at sea; if thou wilt know of my noble rank, know thou that it was lost at Tarsus." "Tell me more precisely," said the maiden, "so that I may understand." Apollonius then related to her all his misfortunes, and at the close of his narrative tears fell from his eyes.



FIG. 13. — Duel between Crusaders.

Romances of Chivalry. — The crusades called every man who had real red blood in his veins. It was the spirit of adventure that put people in the mood for occasionally forgetting the monotony of daily life by visiting the dreamland

of imagination, the only land where the highest literature has its unseen beginning.

During the Norman-English period three great cycles of romance began to flourish in Europe. Those cycles were groups of stories dealing with "matter of France," "matter of Rome" and all the ancient world, and "matter of Britain." The romances dealt with one or more illustrious heroes, chiefly with Charles the Great of France, with Alexander the Great and other characters of the east, or with the deeds of King Arthur and his knights. These were the three chief groups, but popular tales came in from all countries, some of which were based upon recent historical events. Having lived in Britain in the sixth century, Arthur became by far the most popular figure in English romance. Indeed the Arthurian tale of chivalry is the starting point of English romantic fiction.

Geoffrey of Monmouth (1100?–1154). — Before Geoffrey of Monmouth died in 1154, he could scarcely have dreamed to what extent his *History of the Kings of Britain* would inspire the writers of Europe for centuries. Though he wrote in Latin, the work of this Welsh bishop enters so frequently into the later creations of English literature that it cannot be passed in silence. Through his imaginative sympathy the old mythology becomes the new romance, blended with the facts of history. Based upon Keltic poetry and legend, set in a framework of fact, Geoffrey's history appeared in its final form in twelve books, whose details had been largely filled in by the author's fancy. The literary elements that give it charm may be fatal to its value as history, yet we cannot but feel grateful to a man to whom we owe the stories of King Arthur, King Lear, Cymbeline, and Gorboduc, the last of which inspired our first English tragedy. Even the learned Bede mingled history with legend, and it is only in modern times that his-

torians have tried to exclude every trace of fiction from their narratives.

Development of the Romance of Arthur. — Norman or Breton poets like Robert Wace were quick to see the possibilities of a work like that of Geoffrey, which was the first to give in detail the story of Arthur's victories over the Saxon invaders. It is in Wace's metrical version of the romance that we first hear of the Round Table. Subsequently much was added that was chaste and beautiful. The entire series of tales was knit into a literary unity by introducing the tradition of the Holy Grail, the cup used by Jesus at the Last Supper.

Layamon's Brut (1200?). — In the twelfth century there was a great revival of Kymric or Welsh literature, but this is not the place to discuss the gifted bards who wrote in Welsh. Turning his back alike upon the French of the palace and the Latin of the monastery, a Welsh priest named Layamon was the first, among writers of Arthurian romance, to make use of the English language. His version, which contains over 30,000 lines, is called the *Brut*, a name that he borrowed from Wace's poem. Brut was supposed to be the first king of Britain, a great grandson of Æneas of Troy, the hero of Virgil's epic.

Layamon's work, written about the year 1200, is an adaptation of Wace's poem or some later French poem based upon it, and he doubled its length. Where did he obtain the extra material? The answer given by recent study ascribes it almost entirely to Norman interpretation of tales from the Kelts of Brittany. For the first time we hear of the presence of fairies or elves at Arthur's birth, and we also read that the king at his death was conveyed by them in a magic boat to the fairy Queen in the Isle of Avalon.

King Lear's Three Daughters. — Layamon's work is not entirely dull. More than three hundred and fifty years

before Shakespeare wrote his tragedy called *King Lear*, Layamon told a part of the story in the *Brut*. This, of course, is a modern version.

Sixty winters had King Leir
This land wholly governed.
The king had three daughters
By his noble queen.
Not any son had he —
Therefore he was sorry —
His dignity to uphold,
Only these three daughters.
The eldest was called Gornoille,
The second Ragau,
The third Cordoille.
She was the youngest sister,
In face fairest of all;
To her father she was dear
As his very life.



FIG. 14. — Cordoille or Cordelia.

The Castle and the Monastery. — Dance and story help to pass the long winter evening, and in the leisure hours of summer the castle courtyards echo with the noise of football, leaping, wrestling, and similar sports. The minstrel sings to the accompaniment of his tabor or guitar. The jester or professional fool cracks his jokes and shakes his cap and bells to amuse the baron and his guests.

It is not far from the castle to the monastery, whose nail-studded doors of oak we are now approaching. We enter the arched gateway, pass through the broad quadrangle, and finally climb up a narrow winding stair to a chamber called the scriptorium, or writing room. Round the bare stone walls wooden chests are ranged for preserving precious manuscripts. This is vellum that the cowled monk is graciously showing us, and for many months it has received his writing and adornment. In brilliant colors he has traced the fanciful initial letter of each chapter, filling it in with

black ink. Figures of men and angels, birds and flowers, shells and leaves, drawn with rare skill and patience, decorate the margin, whose richness of coloring awakes our admiration.

A Norman-English School. — For their services to literature the long-robed monks of the Middle Ages deserve our gratitude. Besides their evident value as centres of literary work, the monasteries were ready to assist those in distress. Even after universities were established, the monasteries continued to be seats of learning. Look at the pupils sitting in a circular row around the schoolmaster as he reads a special lecture. By the desk are seated two writers, busy with rolls of manuscript like that which the teacher holds in his hand. Most of the lads in that class are destined for one of the learned professions. All of them work earnestly so as to win the approval of their teacher and their own conscience.

The Ancren Riwle (1225?). — *The Ancren Riwle*, or Anchoresses' Rule, is a prose work telling about the rule or course of conduct for three young gentlewomen with their servants, who forsake all worldly pleasures and devote themselves to religion. It may have been composed about the year 1225. Whoever is the author, he warns against the silliness of flirtation, and declares that he has no faith in dreams or in witchcraft. Probably he had a reason for advising silence at meals, and yet he does not favor gloominess. These anchoresses, or lady hermits, he likens to "birds of heaven that sit singing merrily among the green boughs." In simple style, enlivened by a touch of humor, this treatise is the work of a man who knows men as well as books. No better English prose was written during the thirteenth century.

The Debate as a Literary Type. — The Debate in verse is not peculiar to the literature of Europe; in rude form it is familiar to some of the primitive or hunting tribes in different

parts of the globe. By the twelfth century the Debate, which was simpler than the Dialogue in verse, was recognized as a type in Latin literature, and by the thirteenth century it was well known in France, Italy, and Spain.

These mock quarrels or debates were written to show the superiority of a certain object over another. For instance, there were debates or dialogues in verse between Summer and Winter, Body and Soul, Heart and Eye, and so forth. In France and Spain the debates in verse became so popular that in some cases they were changed into folk-songs, known and admired by every one. In Italy the minstrels made use of the debates as a form of entertainment, and it was easy for the warm-blooded Italians to transform the metrical debate into a dramatic recitation. In England the debate, simplified by nurse or mother, in one or two instances became a nursery rime.

The Owl and the Nightingale (1250?). — "Uncanny thing," said the nightingale to the owl, "fly away. My tongue falters when you are near to me." Composed about 1250, *The Owl and the Nightingale* is a debate in verse. The nightingale asserts that her rival is not very good-looking and that he shows poor taste in selecting a meal. She also claims that her music is moral and elevating. "If you are so great a teacher," replies the owl, "why do you not sing to men in Ireland, Norway, and Scotland?"

The owl is a bird of some intelligence, for he quotes the proverbs of King Alfred. The device of employing learned allusions is borrowed from the French poets, who wished to make their verses as witty as possible. Nicholas of Guildford is said to have written this poem of nearly 2000 lines.

How Lyrics Began. — At one time people sang because they were unusually sad or happy. There were no big cities, so every one knew every one else in his clan or village. Long ago a lyric, or song of feeling, consisted of two or three

words chanted over and over again. When there was a holiday, every person danced and sang at the same time. When dancing began to go out of fashion, the lyric became a song of emotion, sung to the accompaniment of the lyre or some other musical instrument. After a time the people began to do as we do. We still sing lyrics like *Auld Lang Syne*, but most poems are not now written for singers.



Royal MS.

FIG. 15. — Anglo-Norman Sword Dance.

Many choruses used to be chanted by the people everywhere, yet they were not considered important enough to be put into writing. Every one knew them, so what was the use of recording them in a manuscript? New songs would appear, and the older lyrics would go out of fashion, till at last they were forgotten altogether.

Norman-English Lyrics. — Anglo-Saxon poetry, as we have noticed, includes religious lyrics like *Cædmon's Hymn* and the *Dream of the Cross*, besides about a dozen secular lyrics such as the *Elegy of Deor*. Under Norman influence new feelings and motives are introduced into the poetry of England, and the style is also novel. Only a few lyrics have survived, and they may not be the finest, though we are grateful for what remains.

Love-songs. — The Norman-English lyrics deal mainly with love. The love-songs generally call our attention to spring or summer, when winter's chill is past and the birds begin to warble their sweet melodies. Two specimens will show the style of an English song six or seven hundred years ago. The first, dating from the latter half of the twelfth century, looks like the complaint of a disappointed lover. The old spelling is retained wherever it does not hide the meaning.

Mirie it is while sumer doth last
With fowls' song;
But now is nigh the wind's blast
And weather strong.
Ei, ei, what this nicht is long!
And I with very much wrong
Sorrow and murne and fast.

About the middle of the thirteenth century was written the best known of those old songs, examples of which may be found in France as well as in England. In the word-music of this part-song we are struck by the beauty of the vowel sound *u* = *oo*, which echoes through almost every line of the poem. This is a feature of ancient and modern Gaelic song, and may be heard to this day in the Western Isles of Scotland.

The Cuckoo Song

Sumer is icumen in,
Lhude (loudly) sing cuccu;
Groweth seed and bloweth mead (bloometh meadow)
And springeth the wood nu (now)
Sing cuccu!
Bleateth after lamb the ewe,
Loweth after calf the cu (cow);
Buck doth gambol, steer doth amble;
Murie (merry) sing cuccu.
Cuccu, cuccu,
Wel singest thu (thou), cuccu,
Nor cease thu ever nu.

Sing cuccu nu! Sing cuccu!
Sing cuccu! Sing cuccu nu!

Religious Songs. — Few lyrics of love have been preserved, as compared with religious songs. One comes from Kildare, Ireland, written on an Anglo-Irish manuscript of the early fourteenth century. Although gospel means

good news, this lyric is as mournful as others of the same class. The Anglo-Saxon poets resemble the poets of ancient Babylonia in being burdened with a sense of the shortness of human life. All that we really know is that here the infant on the mother's knee is lulled to rest with word-pictures of the sorrow that overshadows this earth. The poor little babe is beginning a journey that leads to the mists of death. The opening words of the first of six stanzas have no more meaning than the *Tra-la-la* of a modern song.

An Anglo-Irish Lullaby

Lollai, lollai, litil child!
Why weepest thou so sore?
Needs must thou wepe;
It was ordained of yore
Ever to live in sorrow,
And sigh and mourne evere,
As thine elders did ere this,
While they aliving were.
Lollai, lollai, litil child,
Child, lollai, lullow!
Into unknown world
Icommen so art thou.

Rime in English Poetry. — The Anglo-Saxon style of verse was bound to change even if there had been no Norman Conquest. Rime began to be preferred to alliteration for two reasons. Week after week for centuries the people's taste changed through hearing the Latin hymns in the church service, and during the Norman-English period the graceful rimes of French poetry set the fashion for the whole of western Europe. The Normans had been teaching Englishmen the spirit and the lyric grace of romantic poetry.

SUMMARY

1. France and England are so near that each has inspired the literature of the other, and this was true even before the Norman Conquest.

2. Feudalism, the Crusades, and Chivalry affected each other as well as the thought and the writing of men.

3. Written in Anglo-Saxon verse, *Apollonius of Tyre* is a romance that came from the continent of Europe, where it was very popular.

4. Romances of chivalry deal chiefly with adventures in France, in Rome and the ancient world, and in Britain. The adventures in Britain cluster about Arthur, a king of the Britons defending his country against the Anglo-Saxon invaders and others.

5. Geoffrey of Monmouth, a Welsh bishop who wrote a history in Latin, first made known to Europe the stories of King Arthur, King Lear, and Cymbeline. Tennyson and others made use of the Arthurian tales, while Shakespeare brought King Lear and Cymbeline into drama.

6. It is in the French poem of Robert Wace that we first find the Round Table of Arthur and his knights.

7. About the year 1200 Layamon, a Welsh priest, wrote a long poem called the *Brut*, which was partly based upon Wace's poem. He introduces fairies into the romantic story of Arthur, and alludes to the story of King Lear and his three daughters.

8. The monasteries encouraged young people to study even after the universities were founded, but there was no room in them for lads who were indolent.

9. In simple prose the *Ancren Riwle* was prepared about 1225 for three young women who had no taste for worldly pleasure.

10. People could sing long before writing was invented.

A lyric is so called because at one time it was always sung to the music of a lyre or some other instrument. To-day a lyric is simply a poem that gives utterance to the feelings of its author, and finds echo in the heart of other people.

11. Norman-English lyrics treat chiefly of love and religion.

Test Questions

1. How could a map help us to find out whether France or Russia was the more likely to exert strong influence upon English literature?

2. Why is the feudal system so called? In what way did the crusades modify that system? How was chivalry related to feudalism as well as the crusades?

3. Outline the romance called *Apollonius of Tyre*. To which of the three cycles of romance does it belong? To which cycle does Geoffrey of Monmouth's history seem to belong? Name any literary characters first made known by Geoffrey.

4. Explain the phrases "Round Table" and "Holy Grail." What new feature did the poet Layamon add to the romantic story of King Arthur?

5. Point out some of the differences between life in a Norman-English castle and in a monastery.

6. When a poem reveals feeling rather than a story, to what class of poetry does it belong? What are the chief topics found in Norman-English song? Which of the specimens do you like best? Why?

Additional Authors with Chief Works

Walter Map (1137?–1200), *On Courtly Trifles* (Latin); Gerald of Wales (1147?–1217?), *Invasion of Ireland* (Latin); Orm (1200?), *Ormulum* (Work of Orm); Thomas of Erceldoune (died 1299?), *Tristram;* Robert of Gloucester (1260?–1300?), *Chronicle;* Robert Manning (1260?–1340?), *Handlyng Synne.*

Supplementary Reading

a. For Classes

E. K. Chambers and F. Sidgwick, *Early English Lyrics*, Lond. (Bullen).

G. Z. Gray, *The Children's Crusade*, Bost. (Houghton), $1.50.

P. W. Joyce, *Old Celtic Romances*, N. Y. (Longmans), $1.25.

J. M. Manly, *English Prose*, Bost. (Ginn), $1.50. From 1137 to 1890.

J. M. Manly, *English Poetry*, Bost. (Ginn), $1.50. From 1170 to 1892.

b. For Teachers and Others

R. Garnett and E. Gosse, *English Literature:* Illus., N. Y. (Macmillan), 4 vols., $20 in sets only. From the beginning to Tennyson.

W. P. Ker, *Epic and Romance*, N. Y. (Macmillan), $1.50.

H. Maynadier, *The Arthur of the English Poets*, Bost. (Houghton), $1.50.

L. A. Paton, *Arthurian Tales and Chronicles*, N. Y. (Dutton), $.35.

A. T. Quiller-Couch, *Oxford Book of English Verse*, N. Y. (Oxford Press), $1.90. From 1250 to 1900.

E. Renan, *Poetry of the Celtic Races*, N. Y. (Simmons), $.40.

J. Rhys, *Studies in the Arthurian Legend*, N. Y. (Oxford Press), $3.25.

W. H. Schofield, *English Literature from the Norman Conquest to Chaucer*, N. Y. (Macmillan), $1.50.

CHAPTER IV

THE CHAUCER PERIOD

1300–1400

LET us turn back the hands of the clock of Time, and live for a little while in the fourteenth century, the century whose highest work of genius is Dante's *Commedia*, which was composed in Italy. It is a balmy morning in May, and we are in southern England, rambling among the Malvern Hills in Worcestershire. There is the shepherd of the hills. As he reclines by the bank of a stream, listening to its soothing ripple, he grows drowsy and falls asleep. In a dream he perceives a tower on the crest of a hill, and in the valley beneath is a dark dungeon surrounded by deep ditches. Between the tower and the dungeon is " a faire field ful of folke." All sorts of people are there at work or play — beggars and bishops, bakers and butchers, masons and miners, poor men and rich.

The Lady of the Dream. — Who is this dreaming shepherd of the hills? He is really neither a shepherd nor a hermit, but an English poet. His dream is a puzzle to him until a winsome lady, whose name is Holy Church, makes everything clear.

A loveli ladi of lere (face), in lynnen yclothed,
Come down fram a castel and called me faire,
And seide, " Sone, slepest thou, seest thou this people,
How bisi thei be abouten the mase (throng).
The most part of this people that passeth on this erthe,
Have thei (if they have) worschip (honor) in this worlde, thei wish no better;

Of other hevene than here, holde thei no tale (account)."
I was feared of her face though she faire were,
And seide, " Mercy, Madame, what is this to mene? "

Meaning of the Dream. — She explains that the tower is the abode of Truth, whereas the dungeon is the Castle of Care, the abode of Wrong. The field is the world. Wrong is the father of Falsehood, whom the king vows to punish. Gradually the dreamer sees that each man or woman represents some vice or fault. If a man is too proud of his rank in life, he is called Pride; if fond of money, he is called Avarice. The poet believes that his dream is true, because the people of the dream act like people whom he sees in everyday life.

The Hero of the Dream. — At first the hero is simply an upright Christian man, though in later dreams he is represented as the Savior in disguise. In one of the poet's dreams



Harleian MS.

FIG. 16. — Plowing and Sowing.

some of the people grow tired of their way of living, and they consult a man of experience. This man tells them that he has been in Babylonia, and Bethlehem, and Armenia, but never has he heard of a saint called Truth. Thereupon a plowman declares that he knows Truth very well; indeed he has been in his service for fifty winters. The speaker is Piers the Plowman, after whom the poem is named. The

poet thus brings out the fact that any one with a high sense of duty, however lowly be his station in life, may be the friend of Truth. During the last of the dreams Righteousness and Peace kiss each other. For the last time the dreamer awakes, and with wife and daughter he creeps to the Cross.

William Langland (1332?–1400). — It has been urged that *Piers Plowman* is beyond doubt the work of several authors, but as a matter of convenience we shall glance merely at one author. *Piers Plowman* is usually supposed to have been written in part by William Langland, who may have been born in Shropshire about the year 1332, eleven years after the death of Dante at Ravenna in Italy. We do not know when Langland went to London, but he appears to have spent most of his time there until his death in 1400. He was a man of education, well versed in Latin and in French. He was no spurious patriot. The useless wars with France had led to much suffering among the working classes of England, and the poet had the good sense and the courage to advocate national peace.

Langland was but a tall youth of sixteen or seventeen when a disease called Black Death, entering Europe from Asia or Africa, swept through Italy and France. When it crossed to England, about one-half of the entire population is said to have perished. This caused a scarcity of labor, and the laborers began to demand high wages. The riots that broke out were suppressed with severity. These were some of the social conditions that touched the mind and heart of the author or authors, whose feelings are voiced in *Piers Plowman*. Sometimes the poem is bitter, at all times it is democratic in its sympathies, but it is no advocate of revolution in either church or state. All that is sought is the betterment of social conditions.

Allegories in Verse. — An allegory may be briefly defined as a narrative whose real meaning lies under the surface.

Unlike the fable, it does not introduce animals that have the gift of intelligible speech, and it is longer than a parable. In all the leading countries of Europe the allegory was a fashionable literary type long before the fourteenth century. After the French *Romance of the Rose* had achieved popularity, the union of dream and allegory became customary everywhere. In many respects *Piers Plowman* is strictly original, yet it is steeped in the same symbolism that we find in the literature of western Europe, notably in France, Italy, and Spain.

Melodies Unheard. — All of us recognize the suggestive lines from Keats's *Ode on a Grecian Urn*, and the more we think of them the more we are convinced that mere words can never fully express the deepest longings of the human spirit.

> Heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard
> Are sweeter; therefore, ye soft pipes, play on;
> Not to the sensual ear, but, more endear'd,
> Pipe to the spirit. . . .

Music may utter what words cannot, but even music fails to reveal all the possibilities of our nature. Some of the divinest utterances of music have never been heard except with the inner ear of the soul. The loftiest achievements of poetry, of fine art, are no more than gropings after the ideal, gropings after the noblest things of which our mind can conceive. Their greatness is commensurate with their power to knit mankind into a social unity.

Pearl (1350?). — The words of Keats may help us to see with our own eyes a fine literary gem, fashioned about the year 1350 by an unknown hand. It is the month of August. An innocent child sleeps under one of the many mounds in a country churchyard. Under the tree-shadows the lush grass is dotted with flowers that fill the air with fragrance. Not far distant are the reapers at work with their keen hooks.

Here stands her father — the mother is dead. To him the little daughter is a rare pearl that has fallen among the grass blades into the darkness below. Silence is everywhere, yet the silence begins to croon a lament sweeter than any he had ever heard. In a swoon the father falls upon the mound under which his precious pearl is resting.

As he lies prostrate, his spirit wanders toward a forest whose leaves have the lustre of silver, while birds of beauty sing more joyously than all the minstrels of earth. He comes to a clear river whose channel is speckled with pebbles of emerald and sapphire. Beyond the limpid water rise crystal cliffs so enticing that the father is eager to cross and climb the heights. He dares not; the river is wide and deep, so deep, and not a ford can he discover. Suddenly on the further shore he observes a graceful little maid who is no stranger —

Well known long ere I saw her there.

Qualities of the Elegy. — *Pearl*[1] occurs in a manuscript with three other poems — *Cleanness*, with its great whale story, *Patience*, with its lively tale of the exit from Noah's ark, and *Gawayne and the Green Knight*. *Pearl*, like *Piers Plowman*, is written in alliterative verse, but neither poem follows the Anglo-Saxon models with strictness.

Pearl, another name for Margaret, is an allegory containing one hundred and one stanzas, each of twelve lines, with four beats or accents to the line. Like Poe's *Raven* it sets forth what has often been called the luxury of grief, the pleasure linked with the reminiscence of bygone happiness. It is Tennyson who characterizes the poem as " True Pearl of our poetic prime," and in truth the unknown poet has

[1] Excellent renderings into modern English have been published by S. Weir Mitchell and by Messrs. Israel Gollancz and G. G. Coulton.

daintily portrayed the magic that lies in a sorrow which is not without hope.

John Barbour (1320?–1395). — In 1357 John Barbour was Archdeacon of Aberdeen, a Scottish seaport whose streets so often in the olden times rang with the clash of warlike arms. Born about 1320, Barbour was trained for the church, and his wonderful energy showed that he had good red blood in his veins. With letters of safe-conduct from Edward III, king of England, he on several occasions rode hundreds of miles southward, indifferent to highwaymen and other dangers, so as to study at Oxford and later at Paris. His masterpiece, *The Bruce*, was finished in 1375, twenty years before his death. This historical poem recounts the thrilling story of Robert Bruce, king of the Scots, including dramatic incidents during the battle of Bannockburn in 1314 when Bruce's struggles were crowned with success.



FIG. 17. — Aberdeen Cathedral.

The flight of time so staggers our imagination that it is not easy to realize that men could smile or laugh five hundred years ago. Barbour's *Bruce* reveals humor as well as pathos. The irony in the following lines looks rather modern. After his famous passage in praise of Freedom, the poet slyly says:

> Ye may weile see, though nane yow tell,
> How hard a thing that thraldome is.

For men may weile se, that ar wys (wise),
That wedding is the hardest band
That ony man may tak on hand.

In constant danger of captivity or death, Bruce and his small band of comrades are pursued by many enemies. The king resolves to send the queen and her ladies to the royal castle of Kildrummy in Aberdeenshire for safety. Some will never meet again. This is how the poet depicts the farewell or 'leve-takyng':

The queyne and all hyr cumpany
Leap on thair hors and forth thai fare.
Men mycht haiff sene, quha (who) had bene thar,
At leve-takyng the ladyis gret (sob),
And mak thar face with teris wet:
And knychtis for thar luvis sake
Baith sigh and wep and murnyng mak.
Thai kyssyt thair luvis at thair partyng.



FIG. 18. — Robert Bruce.

The poet is patriotic enough, but he has no malice. He has the courage to be just to his country's foes. In *The Bruce* the Scottish poet praises the splendid qualities of the English leaders. No one can read without a thrill the good-by of Sir Giles de Argentine to Edward II, who is about to retreat from the field of battle.

Barbour, a contemporary of Langland and Chaucer, does not deal with the romances that had been told again and again all over Europe. Choosing as his hero a real monarch whom his own father had probably beheld, he makes use of the material in which he is most

interested. Under Barbour's guidance we see Bruce wandering as a fugitive among the purple heather with bloodhounds on his trail, or tossing in a frail skiff as he crosses the stormy waters. Bruce was by no means a perfect man, yet we can scarcely fail to admire his courtesy and kindness, his sagacity and valor, as well as the loyalty of the friends who share his many hairbreadth escapes. At Bannockburn we look upon the manly English knights and archers pitted against the Highland swordsmen and the Lowland spearmen, while we listen reverently to the friars praying for those who will never again caress mother or sister, wife or daughter. Scott was not the only poet who was inspired by *The Bruce*, a poem which, in spite of its 12,500 lines, remains one of the few medieval works that may still be read with pleasure.

Position of Prose. — The prose of the fourteenth century is of much less consequence than the poetry, and this is true not only of England but of Europe as a whole. English poetry was acquiring greater ease and grace through French influence, while English prose still depended in some measure upon Latin models, for Latin was the chief vehicle of science and religion. Indeed Wyclif and Mandeville are the only two writers that attained any distinction in English prose.

John Wyclif (1324?–1384). — Knowledge of a writer's career and character is of use only so far as it helps us to understand his literary work. At the village of Hipswell in Yorkshire John Wyclif was born about the year 1324. For a time he was Master of Balliol College, Oxford, but he was not content to live among books and students. Wyclif, like Dante, lived in an age when there was often a close connection between politics and literature. He was a natural fighter, finding pleasure in fiery discussions concerning church and state.

The sole reason for introducing him into a history of English

literature is that he planned a translation of the Bible from Latin into English. Possibly influenced by the appearance of *Piers Plowman*, Wyclif began to use English rather than Latin in his sermons and pamphlets so as to induce the people to take more interest in church affairs. It was the same



British Museum

FIG. 19. — Specimen of Wyclif's Bible.

motive that led him to arrange for a translation of the Scriptures. Probably the version of the New Testament was his own work, and it was apparently completed shortly before his death in 1384. Although too often the translation follows Latin rather than English models, yet it encouraged others to improve upon Wyclif's pioneer effort.

This is an extract from Wyclif's work:

And a greet storme of wynd is maad, and sente wawis into the boot (boat), so that the boot was ful. And he was in the hyndir part of the boot, slepynge on a pilewe. And thei reysen hym, and seien (say) to hym, "Maister, perteneth it nat to thee that we perishen?" And he rysynge up, manasside to (menaced or threatened) the wynd, and seide to the see, "Be stille, wexe doumb (wax dumb)."



Harleian MS., British Museum

FIG. 20. — Ship in Wyclif's Time.

Sir John Mandeville (1300?–1371?). — "Wherefore I pray to all the readers and hearers of this book, if it please them, that they would pray to God for me, and I shall pray for them."

That is the closing sentence in a quaint book which professes to have been written in the year 1356. Sir John Mandeville's *Voyage and Travel*, the typical European book of travel of the Middle Ages, was so popular that it was translated into Danish, Dutch, and other languages of Europe. If the author has not a keen sense of humor, then he believes all sorts of stories as readily as a child. For instance, he tells of people with ears that hang down to their knees. Again he meets people who have one foot so big that "it will cover and oumbre all the body" from the rays of the sun. In English there is nothing so entertaining as this, until we come to Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*. On the other hand, Mandeville

at times seems to be trying to give instruction in the guise of romance. Even as late as the time of Columbus most scientists did not believe that the earth was round, whereas this writer definitely states that a ship can sail round the world.



From pen and ink sketch

FIG. 21. — "Ears down to the knees."

This book of alleged travels continues to puzzle the critics. It professes to be a guide to pilgrims about to visit the Holy Land, but it really contains more marvels than any writer had ever collected into a single volume. With the help of the writings of Marco Polo and others the author made some surprising journeys, and they are related with the simplicity and seriousness of Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*. The writer of the *Voyage and Travel* declares that he was born at St. Alban's, England, and that from 1322 he spent over thirty years in Asia and Africa. It has been doubted whether any such person as Sir John Mandeville ever lived, but whoever the author was, he deserves credit for composing the earliest English prose work that displays ease and independence of style.

GEOFFREY CHAUCER (1340?–1400)

The Use of Pictures. — If we look in this book at the pictures of persons or places, we do so because they help us to understand what we may be reading, and the better we understand what we read, the better shall we know how to live. Such pictures we call illustrations because they throw light

upon the men or women, a study of whose character may develop our own. In other words, portraits or pictures of any kind, if they are reliable, make an appeal to reason as well as to imagination. We not only enjoy them, but may profit by them in studying life through literature.

Chaucer's Portrait. — Let us glance for a moment at the picture of Chaucer. The straight Greek nose, harmonizing with the regular features, indicates a love of order and refinement, a taste for what is beautiful, a dislike of quarrels. Sensitiveness to impressions is suggested by the fine delicate eyebrow. The bright expressive eyes look out from under a well-developed broad forehead. The prominent lower brow belongs to a man who has the power of gathering knowledge by observation. The lips are full. They indicate a man of warm feeling, a man who enjoys life, though his judgment usually controls his emotions. As a whole the oval face conveys the idea of refinement, thoughtfulness, shrewdness, and sympathy or toleration.



From Occleve's Miniature. Harletan MS.

FIG. 22. — Geoffrey Chaucer.

Sketch of his Life. — Geoffrey Chaucer, son of a London merchant, was born about 1340. In 1357 the lad was at service in the household of Elizabeth, wife of Lionel, the third son of Edward III. Two years later he accompanied the expedition of Edward against France. He was captured by the French, who released him after the king had sent gold

to purchase his freedom. The poet must have been a genial man of tact and discretion, for he won favor from three kings — Edward III, Richard II, and Henry IV. For a time he acted as royal valet or gentleman-in-waiting, then he became an esquire, and later was made Comptroller of Customs. On several occasions Chaucer was employed as an envoy or special representative of the English monarch, and in this way he had an opportunity to extend his knowledge of the world. In 1378, for example, the poet was dispatched with another gentleman to Italy, where he met Sir John Hawkwood, the free-lance or soldier of fortune, chief of the famous White Company of English spears. Eight years later Chaucer had attained the dignity of membership in Parliament.

Of his wife Philippa we know very little, but we do know that Chaucer wrote one of his prose works, the *Treatise on the Astrolabe*, for the instruction of their little son Lewis. Like most poets he never learned how to save money. Partly by reason of his generous instincts, and partly because he mingled much with the aristocracy, the poet was tempted to spend more than he could afford. More than once his creditors annoyed him. He died in 1400 and he rests in Westminster Abbey.

Unity of Europe. — France is not England, yet each is European. We can scarcely understand the growth of English literature either in thought or in style, if we forget that England is a part of Europe. During the fourteenth century Italy wrested the leadership in literature from France, for no country had given birth to a rival of Dante, and no country had three men of letters like Dante, Petrarca or Petrarch, and Boccaccio. The five points of a star represent the literary men of the century. Three have already been named; the two others are Froissart of France and Chaucer of England.

Chaucer's Growth. — Seldom do we know the date of Chaucer's poems, yet the development of his power may be traced in a general way. For the sake of convenience it is customary to divide his literary career into three periods, — French, Italian, and English, — although, of course, he was always reading those Latin authors that he could procure.

To the early or French period belong poems such as *The Romaunt* (Romance) *of the Rose*, based upon its namesake, the great allegory of love; *ABC* (1366?), a metrical prayer to the Virgin Mary, each stanza beginning with each successive letter of the alphabet; *The Complaint unto Pity* (1366?), wherein the poet seeks Pity and finds her dead; and *The Book of the Duchess* (1369–1370).

To the middle or Italian period belong the *Complaint of Mars* (1380), dealing with Mars and Venus; *Parliament of Fowls* (1382?), depicting a meeting of the Royal Eagle — Richard II — and other so-called fowls or birds; *Troilus and Cressida* (1382?), whose leading characters are supposed to be Trojan lovers at the time set forth in Homer's *Iliad;* the *House of Fame* (1383–1384), written about ten years later than Barbour's *Bruce* and in the same rimed verse; and the *Legend of Good Women* (1385), telling of ten noted women, including Cleopatra of Egypt.

The third or English period comprises *The Canterbury Tales.*

His Experiments. — Really good poets have never been common, yet every one may learn to enjoy what some of the poets have written. We acquire a taste for poetry by reading it, especially when we are alone in the quietness of evening, and can read so slowly that we enter into the spirit of it. Most of us at first read a poem as a task. If we persevere in reading verses that we understand, we learn to read poetry as readily as prose. If we still persevere, we begin to find in certain poems a pleasure such as we have never found in the choicest prose.

When Chaucer began to try to write verse, he did as all other poets have done; he endeavored to imitate those poets that he liked best. When experience gave him skill and self-confidence, he expressed his own thoughts and feelings more and more attractively. No doubt he threw many of his earliest efforts into the fire, but still he was acquiring valuable experience even by his mistakes. The great poets seemed to be able to write like gods, and Chaucer's first experiments appeared so feeble that he felt rather ashamed of them. He did not lose heart, however. He was fond of books. He had learned to read French with such ease that he admired the delightful manner in which the poets of France could tell what they thought and felt.

The Book of the Duchess. — Some of Chaucer's earlier poems have been preserved, the best of which is *The Book of the Duchess*. It is written in honor of Blanche, daughter of the Duke of Lancaster, and wife of Chaucer's life-long friend, John of Gaunt. She died in 1369, so the poem was probably written soon afterward. It is based mainly upon the *Roman de la Rose* and another French poem not so well known. The *Romance of the Rose*, as we call it in English, is an allegory written in the form of a dream.

Chaucer's work also opens with a dream, and the sleep is a welcome relief from eight years of insomnia, described so earnestly that it may really be a glimpse of his own experience. In 1360 he had endured we know not what hardships in a French prison. To "drive the night away" he reads what we know to be one of the works of the Latin poet Ovid, and this leads to sleep and a dream. Here is the dream picture. The poet is awakened by a chorus of birds on a May morning. When he hears the notes of a hunting horn, he rises from his couch to join the hounds and hunters, but at last he finds himself alone. A little dog leads him toward a handsome young man dressed in black, sitting at

the foot of a huge oak. With fine tact the poet addresses the stranger in regard to his sorrow. Thereupon the knight tells a long story concerning the loveliest and most modest of women. This is how he expresses himself:

I saw hir daunce so comlily,
Carole and singe so swetely,
Laughe and pleye so womanly,
And loke so debonairly (gently),
So goodly speke and so frendly,
That certes, I trow, that evermore
Nas (was not) sene so blisful a tresore (treasure). — 848–854.

Although the poem contains some noble passages, yet to us it is somewhat tiresome by reason of its length. Long poems were fashionable in an age when the few who could read had abundance of leisure, an age when the newspaper was as unknown as the telephone.

House of Fame. — One of the best poems of the second or Italian period of Chaucer's literary career is the *House of Fame*, whose chief inspiration comes from Dante. In 1715, more than three hundred years later, Pope showed his appreciation of Chaucer by composing another poem which he called *The Temple of Fame*.

In fancy Chaucer is borne by a golden eagle into the sky. The good-natured bird tells him that he is to have a holiday from his toil at the Custom House, so irksome to a man who is fond of books. The wise eagle lands the poet near a mountain of ice on whose sides the names of many famous people are marked, but the sun is gradually thawing them off. In the north, however, the shadow of a castle preserves the fame even of the ancients. This castle or palace, which Mrs. Browning often alludes to as "The Temple of Glass," is of beryl, and here are names without number. It is the house of the goddess Fame, who sends out Praise or Slander according to her pleasure. The poet is anxious to obtain news

rather than fame. Finally he observes a gentleman of great dignity. His name is not given, but no doubt he is Richard II. The poem is really an allegory wherein Chaucer suggests to the king that he is overburdened with official duties. The hint was taken, and in 1385 the poet was allowed a deputy.



From an old print

FIG. 23. — Canterbury Cathedral.

The Canterbury Tales. — The third or English period of Chaucer's literary career brought forth his masterpiece, *The Canterbury Tales*, so called because the stories are supposed to be told by pilgrims on their way through lovely rural scenes from London to Canterbury. Twenty-nine pilgrims, not counting the poet and the innkeeper, gather at the Tabard Inn of Southwark, which is within view of London Bridge. They intend to visit the tomb of St. Thomas à Becket, Archbishop of Canterbury, who had been slain and buried there over two hundred years before. Until the reign of Henry VIII this was a favorite shrine of English pilgrims.

The pilgrims are going to travel together on horseback, partly for the pleasure of each other's company and partly as a protection against highway robbers.



Ellesmere MS.

FIG. 24. — Chaucer as a Pilgrim.

According to the general prologue or introduction, which is by far the most original part of the poem, each pilgrim is to tell two stories on the way to Canterbury and two more on the homeward journey. The best story-teller is to be entertained at the expense of the others. Only twenty-four tales are related, two of which are in prose, yet there are sufficient to prove that Chaucer was a keen and kindly student of human nature. He tried merely to paint a group of pictures of English people of his own time, but he did the work with such superb skill that it remains a portrait gallery for all time.

Pilgrims at the Inn. — Chaucer's genius could never have blossomed had he been too lazy to observe mankind in books as well as in the flesh. It is not easy to know other people thoroughly; it is perhaps less easy to know ourselves. "Full wise is he that can himselven knowe." The poet had so trained himself that his mind became like a camera, catching details with accuracy. To the inn he brings both saints and sinners in a holiday mood, ready to mingle for a time with a feeling of comradeship, without which the characters would not act and talk in a natural manner. All pretence seems to be absent. These men and women are not wooden puppets, but creatures of flesh and blood like ourselves. Chaucer shows us



Ellesmere MS.

FIG. 25. — The Wife of Bath.

neither king nor beggar, duke nor archbishop, but he collects a body of people who are fairly representative of everyday society. Their appearance he describes and then lets them speak for themselves.

Leaving the Inn. — In Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice* the bagpipe, familiar enough for centuries in all European countries, is an Irish one, the dramatist's other allusions



Ellesmere MS.

FIG. 26. — The Miller.



Ellesmere MS.

FIG. 27. — The Knight.

being to English pipes. The former popularity of this wind-instrument is manifest when Chaucer makes the pilgrims leave the inn, headed by the sturdy Miller playing a lively march on the bagpipe.

A baggepipe wel coude he blowe and soune,
And therewithall he brought us out of toune. — *Prologue*, 565–566.

Two of the Pilgrims. — The two pilgrims of most exalted rank are the Knight and the Prioress, a nun ranking next to the Lady Superior of a convent. The Knight is a man of chivalry who has fought in tournaments and on many a foreign battlefield, yet in his manner he is modest as a maid. He is a soldier who speaks no evil and bears no grudge.

And though that he was worthy he was wise,
And of his port as meke as is a mayde.
He never yet no vilanie ne sayde,
In alle his life, unto no meaner wight (person).
He was a veray parfit gentil knight. — *Prologue*, 68–72.

The most poetic of all the pilgrims' stories are those told by the Knight, the Prioress, and the Franklin or country gentleman. The tender-hearted Prioress, Madame Eglantine, is a woman of fashion, and therefore careful about her manners.

But for to speken of hire conscience,
She was so charitable and so pitous,
She wolde wepe if that she saw a mous
Caughte in a trappe, it were ded or bledde. — *Prologue*, 142–145.

Chaucer's Language. — In Chaucer's time England had three chief dialects or modes of speech, Southern, Midland (from the river Thames to the Humber), and Northern. The standard English speech of to-day is derived from the Midland dialect, which triumphed over the others for two reasons. In the first place, more people used it in the rural districts of England. In the second place, as many of the country people found their way to London, the city gradually became Midland in speech, overwhelming the small Southern element. Since London was the seat of the Court and the Parliament, the London speech very naturally came to be fashionable, and thus it became the standard speech of the English-speaking world. Chaucer, of course, used it because he was a Londoner.

SUMMARY

1. *Piers Plowman* is a poetic allegory in the form of a number of imaginary dreams. Piers the Plowman, hero of the poem, is at last seen to be Jesus in disguise. The poem,

which is in alliterative verse, was written in order to show sympathy with the working people of England.

2. An allegory is a story that has two meanings, but it does not make animals talk as they do in fables.

3. *Pearl* is another allegory in alliterative verse, wherein an unknown man tells about his little daughter who is dead.

4. John Barbour's *Bruce* is a historical poem about Robert Bruce, king of Scotland. Barbour was a true patriot, and therefore he had too much sense to abuse his country's enemies. He knew that the people of all countries have some good qualities.

5. English prose of the fourteenth century was at times a sort of imitation of Latin prose, which was used by all men of learning throughout Europe.

6. John Wyclif wrote a translation of the New Testament from Latin into English, and he supervised the translation of the whole Bible.

7. Some man, who claimed to be Sir John Mandeville, issued a book of travels as a guide to the Holy Land. It is highly entertaining, though we must not believe every detail that he wrote.

8. Geoffrey Chaucer, the greatest writer that we have hitherto considered, was never so busy that he failed to take time to enjoy good books. His first efforts at writing poetry are imitations of the poets of France. Neither the *Book of the Duchess,* nor the *House of Fame,* nor any of his other works is so delightful as the *Canterbury Tales.* The tales are supposed to be told by pilgrims during their journey from London to Canterbury. Chaucer is admired for his modesty, his humor, his skill as a story-teller, and his ability to portray human nature.

9. Modern English is derived from the Midland dialect, and Chaucer used this dialect because he was a Londoner.

Test Questions

1. Who interpreted the first dream in *Piers Plowman?* What is the interpretation? What was the poet's purpose in writing the allegory?

2. What is the lesson to be learned from the dream poem called *Pearl?*

3. How does Barbour prove that it is possible to show fair play toward enemies? What makes *The Bruce* more interesting than the older romances?

4. Why is the prose of the fourteenth century more backward than the poetry?

5. What was Wyclif's motive in arranging for a translation of the Bible into English?

6. Account for the popularity of Mandeville's book of travel. Do you remember any of the marvels that he mentions?

7. What is the use of paying attention to faces? Look at any portrait and explain what you observe.

8. In what sense may we speak of the unity of Europe? How may we acquire a taste for poetry?

9. How did Chaucer acquire skill as a poet? Indicate the three periods in his literary career, and name one of the works produced during each period. What was the poet's object in writing *The Canterbury Tales?* What qualities in Chaucer are most admired?

ADDITIONAL AUTHORS WITH CHIEF WORKS

Laurence Minot (1300?–1352), *Political Verses;* John Gower (1325?–1408), *Confessio Amantis* (A Lover's Confession); John of Trevisa (1326?–1412), *Polychronicon* (a translation); Dan Michel (1340?), *Ayenbite of Inwyt* (Remorse of Conscience); Huchown (1342?–1377?), *Pistill* (Epistle) *of Susan.*

SUPPLEMENTARY READING

a. For Classes

A pocket edition of Mandeville, with modernized spelling, is included in Cassell's National Library, Funk, Wagnall, N. Y., paper $.15, cloth $.25. A good library edition, large and well printed, is that in the Library of English Classics by Macmillan, $1.50. The same firm has selections from Chaucer at $.25 (Pocket Classics). Chaucer's

complete works can be obtained from Macmillan, $1.75; Oxford Press, $1.75; and Crowell, $.60. Besides *The Cambridge History*, Garnett and Gosse, Jusserand, Quiller-Couch, Taine, and Ten Brink, already mentioned, the following are recommended:

S. W. Mitchell, *Pearl*, N. Y. (Century), $1.00.

H. S. Ward, *Canterbury Pilgrimages*, Phila. (Lippincott), $1.75.

R. C. Witt. *How to Look at Pictures*, N. Y. (Macmillan), $2.00.

b. For Teachers and Others

Chambers's *Cyclopædia of English Literature*, Phila. (Lippincott), 3 vols., $12.00 per set.

H. Craik, *English Prose*, N. Y. (Macmillan), 5 vols., $1.10 ea.

E. R. Hooker, *Study Book in English Literature*, Bost. (Heath), $1.00.

J. J. Jusserand, *English Wayfaring Life in the Middle Ages*, N. Y. (Putnam's), $3.00.

E. Legouis, *Geoffrey Chaucer*, N. Y. (Dutton), $1.50.

T. R. Lounsbury, *Studies in Chaucer*, N. Y. (Harper), 3 vols., $9.00.

H. N. MacCracken, *College Chaucer*, New Haven (Yale Press), $1.50.

W. M. Mackenzie, *The Bruce*, N. Y. (Macmillan), $1.90.

R. Morris and W. W. Skeat, *Specimens of Early English*, N. Y. (Oxford Press), Pt. II, $1.90.

W. H. Schofield, *Chivalry in English Literature*, Cambridge (Harvard Press), $2.50.

W. W. Skeat, *Piers the Plowman*, N. Y. (Oxford Press), $1.10.

F. J. Snell, *Age of Chaucer*, N. Y. (Macmillan), $1.00.

A. W. Ward, *Chaucer*, E. M. L. series, N. Y. (Macmillan), $.40.

T. H. Ward, *English Poets*, N. Y. (Macmillan), selections (Chaucer to Tennyson), 4 vols., $1.00 ea.

CHAPTER V

POPULAR BALLADS

EVERY ONE knows that popular songs are composed and set to music year after year. The latest song may become so familiar that schoolboys sing or whistle it in the streets, yet it will probably be forgotten in a few months. An occasional song such as *Home, Sweet Home* survives the flight of time, because it possesses qualities that make a strong appeal to the human heart. Whether they live or die, these popular songs are not ballads. They are simply lyrics or songs of emotion.

What is a Ballad? — A ballad is a short, simple story, told in verse by generation after generation of the people in a rural community. It is a tale which has been sung or recited so long that no one knows who was the first singer. A true ballad is preserved, not by professional minstrels or poets, but by people who did not learn it out of a book. In passing from one person to another it underwent changes because people forgot or misunderstood some of the words, and so they sang it as best they could. After a time a true ballad has changed so much that the person or persons who composed it might not recognize it. In other words, a ballad is the product of many singers, who passed it on to others until it assumed permanent form, when some one wrote it down from the lips of a singer and printed it for the benefit of all lovers of literature.

Diffusion of Ballads. — Any unabridged dictionary explains that the word ballad is derived from the French

ballade, a dancing song, a song sung by the people as they danced. Such ballads in crude form possibly survive in some of the traditional child-games of Britain and America, such as "Round the Merry May-tanzie." Folk-songs of this sort are danced and sung by tribes in Australia, Africa, and other parts of the world. One generation after another memorizes the words and the music of the ballads, the simplest of which consist of only one or two lines repeated again and again. Sometimes there are words in these lines that have no meaning. The original meaning, if ever there was one, has been lost. That is to say, sometimes the words have no more meaning than our *Tra-la-la*.

Date of Ballads. — It was during the fifteenth century that the English ballads began to attract the attention of men of letters, who hitherto had been more interested in the polished verses of professional poetry. Oral compositions readily lend themselves to new conditions. Substitution of a local name, in place of another not so well known, is done every day by people who make or tell jokes, and this device quickens the interest of the hearers. Words no longer in common use are apt to be supplanted by more modern words, and thus an old ballad may look more recent than the date of its birth would imply. The Robin Hood ballads of the country people are casually alluded to in *Piers Plowman*, and *The Bruce* evidently contains a reference to popular ballads. Barbour omits the story of a victory gained by Sir John Soulis on the plea that

> Whoso likes, thai may hear
> Young wemen, when thai will play,
> Syng it amang thaim ilk (every) day.

Origin of Ballads. — Ireland, Wales, and the Scottish Highlands have numerous ballads, only a few of which have been written and translated into English. Most of the Eng-

lish ballads, that now appear in print, belong to the north of England and the Scottish Lowlands. In other words, they belong to portions of the country that are not too near big cities like London and Edinburgh. Each ballad calls for careful examination before we attempt to suggest its origin. Most of them may have come direct from the heart of the people, from plain country people who had a taste for the sort of verse that pleased the community as a whole. A popular tale, ancient or recent, would be versified to fit a popular melody. One ballad may have been a dance-song, whose lines were composed on the spur of the moment by one after another of the dancing throng; another may be the simplified form of a romance that had been composed and set to music by professional poets or by minstrels. In every case, however, such ballads were so altered by generations of amateur singers that they became poetry of the people, or narrative folk-songs.

Kinds of Ballads. — We may classify ballads by their subject-matter in this way:

1. Romantic — ballads dealing with love, happy or unhappy, and narrated with imaginative sympathy. A good example of happy love is *Young Beichan*, whereas *Bewick and Grahame* shows two young men who loved each other, and yet were impelled to a duel in which both perished.

2. Supernatural — those dealing with ghosts, fairies, or other beliefs of our early forefathers. The outcome of magic is well seen in *King Estmere*.

3. Historical — dealing mainly with adventures and battles, or with exploits of Robin Hood and other outlaws. *The Battle of Otterburn* celebrates a conflict between Douglas and Henry Percy (Hotspur) in 1388.

4. Domestic — dealing with some humorous incident, or with narratives adapted to the taste of children.

Sir Patrick Spens. — " The grand old ballad of Sir Patrick

Spens," as the poet Coleridge styled it, may claim to be the oldest ballad which seems to have a historic basis. Some authorities believe that it refers to the shipwreck, on the homeward voyage, of the noblemen who escorted Margaret, daughter of Alexander III of Scotland, to her marriage with Eric of Norway. This took place in 1281, but the date of the ballad is unknown, and the ballad may have no connection with the shipwreck here mentioned.

The opening scene is at Dunfermline, which lies sixteen miles northwest of Edinburgh. For a time it was the ancient capital of Scotland, and it remained a residence of royalty as late as the seventeenth century. Malcolm Canmore, Robert Bruce, and other kings were entombed in the abbey.

The king sits in Dunfermline toune,
Drinking the blude-red wine:
"O whar will I get guid sailor
To sail this schip of mine?"

Up and spak an eldern (elderly) knicht,
Sat at the king's richt knee:
"Sir Patrick Spence is the best sailor
That sails upon the se."

The king has written a braid (broad, open) letter,
And signed it wi' his hand,
And sent it to Sir Patrick Spence,
Was walking on the strand.

The first line that Sir Patrick red,
A loud lauch (laugh) lauched he;
The next line that Sir Patrick red,
The teir blinded his ee (eye).

"O wha is this has don this deid,
This ill deid don to me,
To send me out this time o' the yeir,
To sail upon the se!

"Mak haste, mak haste, my mirry men all,
Our guid schip sails the morne (to-morrow)":
"O say na sae (so), my master deir,
For I feir a deadlie storme.

"Late late yestreen (last night) I saw the new moone
Wi' the auld moone in hir arme,
And I feir, I feir, my deir master,
That we will cum to harme?"

O our Scots nobles wer richt laith (loath)
To weet (wet) their cork-heild schoone (shoes);
Bot lang owre (ere) a' the play wer playd,
Thair hats[1] they swam aboone (above).

O lang lang may thair ladies sit
Wi' their fans into thair hand,
Or eir (ere ever) they se Sir Patrick Spence
Cum sailing to the land.

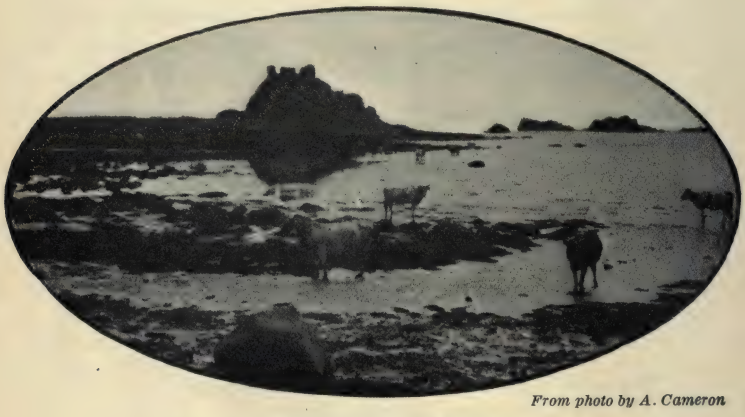
O lang lang may the ladies stand
Wi' thair gold kems (combs) in thair hair,
Waiting for thair ain deir lords,
For they'll se thame na mair (no more).

Haf owre (half over), haf owre to Aberdour,
It's fiftie fadom (fathom) deip,
And thair lies guid Sir Patrick Spence,
Wi' the Scots lords at his feit.

Criticism. — Criticism is not faultfinding, but giving a competent estimate of the value of a composition. The poet Cowper says in one of his letters: "The ballad is a species of poetry, I believe, peculiar to this country." Of course, he was mistaken. Robert Jamieson, in his *Popular Ballads*

[1] The Scots nobles were very reluctant to wet their cork-heeled shoes, but long before all the play was played, their hats were swimming above, and the owners of them were down in the bottom of the sea.

and Songs, was the first to point out the striking likeness that exists between some of the ballads of different countries of northern Europe. Spain and many other countries possess excellent ballads, and yet it is not too much to say that *Sir Patrick Spens* is as remarkable a historical ballad as one may find anywhere. It has the essence of true poetry inasmuch as its rhythmic lines make a strong appeal to the imagination. It begins as abruptly as a news story in a daily paper.



From photo by A. Cameron

FIG. 28. — Scene from the Inner Hebrides.

Simple and suggestive, not a word is wasted. The action is swift, and its very repetitions are dramatic, weaving a spell over the reader. Few ballads have such charm of language or of sentiment, although most of them possess a hearty vigor.

Hebridean Ballads. — Do you see the house that nestles near the shore, with its back to the heaving sea? Indifferent to raw wind and soft sleet, young and old are walking toward it in the darkness. With that politeness which is native to these people, the strangers are invited to the cosiest seats. Here is a twentieth-century community that still

enjoys oral or unwritten literature. Of course, the people can read and write, but reading and writing are for business or for public worship. One man is a historian with a remarkable memory; another deliberately mingles fiction with fact to give it an air of romance. A third recites heroic songs and ballads, altering some of the words to express his passing mood or fancy. Proverbs are quoted, conundrums or riddles are exchanged, but never will you hear a word that might offend. Surely a custom of this sort is well adapted to cultivate the mind and warm the heart of an intelligent people. They live among the Western Isles or Hebrides of northern Britain, the scene of Wordsworth's rare poem *The Solitary Reaper*. Their ballads are in Gaelic, but to see these islanders is to see the manner in which our forefathers found pleasure, composing, chanting, and listening to tales of bygone days.

Oral English Ballads. — Progress, which includes the invention of printing and the growth of cities at the expense of rural communities, has almost stopped the oral circulation of the ballad in the mother country. A few of those English ballads that were collected and printed still survive through oral transmission. They were learned from the lips of older people rather than from books. Such survivals, often mingled with elements picked up in a new environment, are to be found in some of the more isolated parts of America, notably in the Alleghany Mountains and along parts of the Atlantic coast. In everyday speech the older inhabitants of Hatteras Island, North Carolina, employ some of the expressions that are found in the English ballads.

Back in the seventh century Cædmon was embarrassed because he could not sing at a literary entertainment resembling that of the Hebrides, and since his time the fairies and elves and mermaids have had a hard struggle. In a few remote districts of the British Isles the fairies continue to

thrive. On Hatteras Island are three mermaid songs that may occasionally be heard among the older women. One of them, sung to a tune of the days of Queen Elizabeth, opens with the lines:

> Follow, follow through the sea,
> To the mermaid's melody.[1]

Broadsides. — In literary history a broadside is a broad or large sheet of paper with a ballad or other matter printed on one side. In England the songs and ballads of the people were at an early date printed in the shape of broadsides or broadsheets, such as were sold in Shakespeare's time. Generally ornamented with crude woodcuts or pictures, they were sold in thousands from the sixteenth century onward; indeed they are still printed in London and other cities. The place of the wandering minstrel of older days was taken by the man who sang broadside ballads in the streets and at village fairs in order to induce his hearers to purchase copies.[2] Other men who could not or would not sing acted as hawkers or pedlers.

The broadside ballads are of two kinds, real ballads of the people and imitations. Sometimes the old traditional ballads were altered by hack-writers, that is, writers employed by publishers who paid them to meet the public demand. More than once Shakespeare and other Elizabethan dramatists jeer at these ballad-mongers or ballad-makers. The imitations of ballads were entirely the work of men who made them for money. As a rule they have but little literary value, although they throw a side-light on the language and customs of the age in which they were written.

[1] C. Cobb, "Early English Survivals in Hatteras Island," *North Carolina Review*, 1910.

[2] Even now you may hear such men in some parts of the motherland.

Chap Books. — Chap books are little books like pamphlets, bound in paper wrappers. Most of them are adorned with a crude woodcut or two, although others have finely colored plates and are printed in black letter, that is, in the Gothic or Old English type used in the earliest printed books. They were sold throughout the British Isles by travelling chapmen or pedlers. Chap books of the time of Charles I, for instance, are invaluable to those who wish to know the feelings of the country folk toward the troubles which led to the appearance of Cromwell. Besides political discussions, recipes, and weather forecasts the chap books contain tales, anecdotes, biography, songs, and ballads. In fact, the chap books were the cheap libraries of the poor folk for several centuries, and through them different versions of some of the genuine ballads are preserved.

Garlands, in a literary sense, are collections of choice bits of prose or poetry. They differ from broadsides only in their form and are really a species of chap book. Several of the Robin Hood texts first appeared in garlands.

Ballads and Other Poetry. — Professional poetry had attained a high degree of polish in the days of Dryden and Pope, but fashions change in literature as in life. Long before 1765 popular ballads had appeared in broadsides and in collections, but Percy's *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry* appeared in a dignified form at the moment when educated people were ready to give it a welcome. Naturally it won instant popularity, and in some measure it tended to introduce elements that had for a while been rather neglected in English poetry. Every change in fashion leads to extravagances on the part of those who fail to understand the spirit that lies behind the movement, and so it was in the eighteenth century. Here is the main issue for us at this stage. Why did the ballads influence other types of poetry? The answer is simple. It was the strong imaginative quality

of the ballads that tended to quicken other forms of poetry. There was romance in them, and romance implies aspiration, desire for something that seems better, something closer to the ideals of human nature.

SUMMARY

1. Popular songs of to-day are lyrics or songs that depict emotion, whereas ballads tell a short story in simple verses. Long before any true ballad was printed, it had been chanted or recited and handed on by word of mouth from father to son. Until a ballad is written or printed, it is sure to undergo constant changes.

2. Ballads exist in all lands, even among lowly tribes of hunters. Of course, some of these ballads have only a line or two, and they may contain words without any more meaning than our *Tra-la-la*.

3. No one knows when English ballads were first composed, but they began to interest literary men in the fifteenth century. Most of the extant specimens belong to northern England and to Scotland, nearly all of them being the work of plain people living in the country.

4. Ballads may be classified as romantic, supernatural, historical, or domestic.

5. The historical ballad *Sir Patrick Spens* is supposed to be based upon a shipwreck that occurred in the North Sea in the year 1281.

6. Among the Hebrides Islands some ballads are now being shaped and transmitted in the way that used to be common all over the British Isles. A few of the printed ballads are still recited by English-speaking people who did not learn them from a book.

7. A broadside is a broad sheet of paper with a ballad or some sort of printed matter on one side of the sheet. Broad-

side ballads are either real folk-poetry or verses written so as to look like ballads.

8. Chap books are cheap books resembling pamphlets, some of which contain old ballads.

9. Ballads eventually influenced professional poetry by helping to introduce a new reverence for imagination and simple naturalness.

Test Questions

1. Why are most of the new popular songs soon forgotten? Distinguish between a popular song and a ballad. What induces change in the form of unwritten ballads?

2. It is hard to tell when a ballad was first composed. Why? What two poems of the fourteenth century contain a reference to popular ballads?

3. To what class of ballads does *Sir Patrick Spens* belong? Do you like it? Give a reason.

4. What is criticism?

5. To what islands does Wordsworth allude in *The Solitary Reaper?* Why should a student care anything about them?

6. Why are ballads not so common as they were among our forefathers? Are there any traces of old English ballads in America?

7. Distinguish between a broadside and a chap book. What purpose was served by broadside ballads and by chap books? What is a hackwriter?

8. In what way did ballads begin to influence professional poetry of the eighteenth century?

SUPPLEMENTARY READING

I. *Criticism*

W. J. Courthope, *History of English Poetry,* 6 vols., N. Y. (Macmillan), $3.25 ea. (Vols. I and II.)

A. B. Gomme, *Children's Singing Games,* N. Y. (Macmillan), 2 vols., $1.50 ea.

F. B. Gummere, *Beginnings of Poetry,* N. Y. (Macmillan), $3.00.

T. F. Henderson, *The Ballad in Literature,* N. Y. (Putnam's), $.40.

W. P. Ker, *On the History of the Ballads,* N. Y. (Oxford Press), $.60.

G. M. Miller, *Dramatic Element in the Popular Ballad*, Cincinnati (Univ. of Cinci. Press), $.50.

W. W. Newell, *Games and Songs of American Children*, N. Y. (Harper), $1.50. Illus.

G. G. Smith, *The Transition Period*, N. Y. (Scribner's), $1.50.

II. *Collections*

Besides the list given in Sidgwick's *Popular Ballads*, the following collections of ballads (with introductions) are recommended:

M. J. Brown, *Historical Ballad Poetry of Ireland*, N. Y. (Longmans), $1.00.

E. A. Bryant, *Best English and Scottish Ballads*, N. Y. (Crowell), $.75.

F. J. Child, *English and Scottish Popular Ballads*, Bost. (Houghton), 5 vols. This is the standard work — out of print.

G. Eyre-Todd, *Scottish Ballad Poetry*, Glasgow (Hodge), $1.00.

R. Ford, *Vagabond Songs and Ballads of Scotland*, Paisley (Gardner), $1.25.

F. B. Gummere, *Old English Ballads*, Bost. (Ginn), Glossary, notes, etc. $.80.

R. D. Joyce, *Ballads of Irish Chivalry*, N. Y. (Longmans), $.90.

H. C. Sargent and G. L. Kittredge, *English and Scottish Ballads*, Bost. (Houghton), $3.00. An excellent introduction to Child's collection.

F. Sidgwick, *Popular Ballads of the Olden time*, Lond. (Bullen), $1.00.

F. Sidgwick, *Ballads and Poems Illustrating English History*, N. Y. (Putnam's), $.40. Prepared especially for beginners.

R. A. Witham and W. A. Neilson, *Representative English and Scottish Popular Ballads*, Bost. (Houghton). Paper $.30, cloth $.40. Riverside Literature series.

CHAPTER VI

THE TRANSITION PERIOD

1400–1564

For the sake of convenience the history of Europe may be divided into three sections — ancient, medieval, and modern. The ancient or oldest form of civilization received its death-blow when the western Roman Empire was crushed by hosts of barbarians in the fifth century. Medieval times, or the Middle Ages, are so called because they are in the middle of the ancient and modern sections of political and literary history. The Middle Ages extend from the fifth century to the beginning of the fifteenth. The fifteenth and the first half of the sixteenth century may be called the transition period, the period that reveals the gradual change from medieval to modern civilization. Of course, there is no definite year that marks the beginning of such a transition. However carefully we watch, we can never observe a healthy child growing at any particular moment. The growth is gradual because it is natural, and so it is with the growth or development of literature.

The Revival of Learning. — One of the chief factors in producing the transition from medieval to modern ways of thinking is known as the Revival of Learning or the New Learning. Here the word learning means knowledge of ancient or classical Latin and Greek. Revival really means bringing back to life, but it is a mistake to fancy that Europe was in any sense dead prior to the fifteenth century. The Revival of Learning does not imply that medieval Europe

had been ignorant of classical learning. The schools of the monasteries and the cathedrals had preserved Latin ever since the fall of the Roman Empire, though classical Greek was not nearly so well known. European scholars were mostly clergymen. From about the fifth century they were not content with the plain meaning of the Scriptures and the Latin books in general. They tried to find a hidden meaning, a sort of allegory, and this custom spread to European poetry where we find ideas presented in the form of imaginary dreams, as, for instance, in Chaucer's *House of Fame.*

The Revival of Learning means a new way of studying and applying the ancient classics. It was in Italy during the fourteenth century that the old Latin and Greek writings began to be studied as literature. Men no longer examined them to obtain facts, but to enjoy the charm and naturalness of the style. For the first time they began to appreciate the beauty of the sentences of ancient writers and the beauty of the ancient conception of life upon earth.

Humanism. — The *humanitas* of the old Latin writers is the refining influence of good literature. A man was considered to be truly human when his character had been shaped by the best principles of classical literature. Thus humanism, which is merely another name for the New Learning, is the polish received from a training in the ancient classics, especially those of Greece. All through the Middle Ages Constantinople had been the centre of Greek learning, but in 1453 this city was captured by the Turks. No doubt many teachers of Greek left for Italy and other lands, yet this event was merely an incident in the story of humanism. At least a century earlier, Greek studies had been earnestly pursued at Florence and other cities of Italy. In short, the Italian revival of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries was really an endeavor to return to the noblest ideals of ancient Greek manhood.

The Italian Revival. — Why did the Revival of Learning begin in Italy, spreading finally to England and other countries? It is not easy to give a complete answer, and yet two or three facts are sometimes better than two or three dozen theories. Venice was the commercial centre of Europe, while Rome was its religious centre. Ships of the Venetian republic carried most of the Crusaders to the Holy Land, and many



From an old print

FIG. 29. — Venice.

Venetian citizens had settled as traders in Constantinople. Other Italian cities such as Genoa became very prosperous through foreign trade. The people of those cities began to take pride in the language and literature of the ancient Romans, who for centuries had ruled the civilized world. Patriotic sentiment quickened the desire to dignify Latin by cultivating the ease and accuracy of the ancients. Well aware that the Greeks had aided Latin literature in the olden days, the Italians of Florence and other cities became imbued with a desire to study Greek models. Venice

was in a position to import Greek manuscripts and Greek teachers, and in this praiseworthy effort she was encouraged by the church at Rome.

The Renaissance. — It is a familiar fact, that the French word Renaissance means new birth, and the word is useful enough if we are willing to give due credit to the Middle Ages. The Renaissance is the outcome of the Revival of Learning. The new interest in the ancient classics stirred men's reason and imagination. For example, the leaders of the people became anxious to save the remains of ancient sculpture and architecture from destruction. Thus arose in Italy during the fifteenth century the Renaissance architecture, which at first was an attempt to revive classical forms. By the next century the style in its modified form had taken root in England. The new movement began to affect painting in the fourteenth century, developing with the work of Raphael, Michel Angelo, and other artists of world-wide renown. Every phase of the movement was inspired by a desire for the highest efficiency, a desire that has continued to stimulate modern literature. It was for this reason that society began to lay more stress upon the worth of its individual members, and it was for this reason that towns and petty states tended to unite into well-organized nations.

The Invention of Printing. — The invention of printing alone would be sufficient to make the fifteenth century one of the most illustrious in the world's history. It was one of the biggest tributaries that joined the main stream of the Renaissance. The literary revival, which was narrower in scope than the Renaissance, created a demand for books, and the printing-press, under the patronage of the church, rendered the new knowledge accessible even to those who were not wealthy. Without this unique stimulus to the development of literature, most people would still be unable to read and write.

A Royal Poet (1394–1437). — In 1431 Joan of Arc, the wonderful maid of Orleans, was burned at the stake, after having led the French troops to a series of victories over the English invaders. Six years later another woman, one of the Scottish queen's ladies, brought new lustre to her sex. It was a dark night in February. When the tramp of armed men was heard outside Blackfriars Abbey in Perth, and the torches threw their glare against the windows of the royal chamber, it was Catherine Douglas who, for lack of a bolt, thrust her arm into the staples of the door, so as to give James I a chance to escape.



From an old print

FIG. 30. — James I, the Royal Poet.

Truly, the career of this king, like that of most of the Stuart kings, reads like a romance. Eleven years after his birth at Dunfermline, the ship on which the young James was sailing to France was captured by the English. By order of Henry V the imprisoned prince received an excellent education. Sixteen years later he served as an officer of English troops during the French war. Two years thereafter he met the Lady Jane Beaufort, niece of Henry IV, a lady who, according to the poem of her lover, had

> Beautee eneuch to mak a world to dote.

In 1424, the year after he first saw her, James promised the

English an enormous ransom for his freedom, and was allowed to take his bride northward into Scotland. He found his native land in much trouble. The lawless barons he restrained with a resolute hand, but in 1437 his enemies stabbed him to death in the city of Perth.

James I lived in an age when it was fashionable for poets to indulge in allegory. His literary reputation rests upon *The Kingis Quair* (King's Quire or Book), whose introduction is not without originality. Unable to sleep, the poet broods over his misfortunes. With an undercurrent of humor, quiet though quick, he compares his life to a feeble boat tossing on a winter night among black rocks that thrust up from the waves.

> The lak of wynd is the deficultee
> In enditing of this lytill treatise small. — Stanza 18.

He alludes to his capture in boyhood. If birds, beasts, and fishes are free, why should Fortune make him a slave? James gives a fine description of a fair lady walking in the garden with her two maidens, and she it is with whom he falls in love. When she becomes gracious, he blesses even his prison walls. In spite of old-fashioned imagery, some of which he borrowed from Chaucer, the melodious lines often throb with sincere emotion, and no poet has ever painted the longing of love with more delicacy. After addressing a poetic prayer to the goddess of love, he expresses his belief that even to be the lady's dog is worth while.

> When I with gude intent this orisoun (prayer)
> Thus endit had, I stopped a lytill stound (while);
> And oft mine eye full pitously adown
> I cast, behalding unto hir lytill hound,
> That with his bells playit on the ground.
> Then wold I say, and sigh therewith a lyte (little),
> A! wele were him that now were in thy plight.
> — Stanza 53.

Sir Thomas Malory (1400?–1471). — Sir Thomas Malory may have been born in Warwickshire about the year 1400, and in his youth he seems to have served under the famous Earl of Warwick in the fighting against the French. Apparently Malory took part in the bitter Wars of the Roses



FIG. 31. — Glastonbury Abbey, where King Arthur is Buried.

(1455–1485), joining the party of Lancaster. The Lancastrian badge was the red rose, whereas the party of York adopted the white rose. In 1471 Malory was buried at the Gray Friars near Newgate in the suburbs of the London of that time.

Malory's reputation as a great prose writer rests upon his *Morte d'Arthur* (Death of Arthur), a work which is based mainly upon French romances. The story of this ancient

king of Britain has already been considered in connection with Layamon. Malory's romance is no mere translation, for he selects his material to suit his own artistic feeling. Here and there he adds original touches in order to make his work interesting to the people of his time, and this he has done so well that it is readable to this day. "How Sir Lancelot came into the Chapel Perilous, and gat there of a dead corpse a piece of cloth and a sword." "How the damsel and Beaumains came to the siege and came to a sycamore tree, and then Beaumains blew an horn, and then the Knight of the Red Lands came to fight him." Chapter-titles like these are enough to make any one eager to read, even if at times one is rather puzzled to see the connection between the various tales or incidents.

Malory's book is generally admired for its simplicity and dignity of style; the story never drags, though the construction of some of the sentences is tangled. This prose romance of the fifteenth century reveals the eternal triangle, as it is sometimes called, the action and reaction between the three leading characters — King Arthur, Sir Lancelot, and the unfortunate Queen Guinevere. Tennyson's *Idylls of the King*, Matthew Arnold's *Death of Tristram*, and Morris's *Defense of Guinevere* are among the modern works that owe much to Malory.

William Caxton (1422?–1491). — Malory's romance, published in 1485, was one of the books issued by William Caxton from his printing-press beside Westminster Abbey, and as the pioneer English printer and publisher he is well worthy of mention in any literary history. Born in Kent about 1422, Caxton served as an apprentice to a London merchant. Later he crossed over to the continent and settled in the Flemish city of Bruges, where he became prosperous. As a relief from business cares he devoted his leisure to literature. By his translation of a French story of the siege of Troy, he

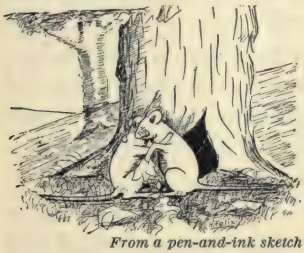
won the favor of an English princess who had become the wife of the Duke of Burgundy, and so many people requested copies that Caxton felt obliged to turn his attention to the new invention of printing. After mastering its details he introduced printing into his native land about the year 1476.

He translated other books with a fair degree of success. Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* and many other works came from the press before Caxton's death in 1491.

Pastoral Poetry. — In the literary sense a pastoral is a poem in which shepherds, sensitive to the charm of rural sights and sounds, are supposed to speak and act in a simple cheerful manner. The earlier history of the pastoral shows that it is a poem apparently filled with the spirit of rural life, as seen through the eyes of a poet who is often a nature-lover dwelling in a city. The pastoral professes to reveal country love and country life, stripped of its homeliness and beautified by the poet's fancy. It is a type of poetry that was created in sunny Sicily many centuries ago. At intervals it bloomed in Italy and France, until it crossed to Britain, where it was first cherished by Robert Henryson.

Robert Henryson (1430?–1506?). — About the year 1430 two notable men were born. One was Villon, the most brilliant French poet of the century, and the other was Robert Henryson, who, like Longfellow, was a teacher as well as a poet. After receiving a college education Henryson became master or principal of the Abbey School at Dunfermline. It is still possible to tell something of the poet's nature from the tone of his verses. Quiet and genial, he must have been a favorite with his pupils. When school was dismissed, he would take a walk, sometimes along the seashore, sometimes far inland, thinking over what he had read or heard or observed. Henryson died about the year 1506, a date which also marks the death of Christopher Columbus.

Henryson plunges into his subject with the vigor and sureness of a master. *Robene and Makyne*, the earliest of British pastorals, is amusing as well as touching. We see the shepherdess wooing the shepherd. Though at first Robene treats the girl's attentions with indifference, yet after an interval he begins to discover that he is really in love. Next time he meets Makyne he confesses his affection, but her reply is, "Robene, that warld is all away." They never reach an understanding. The easy-flowing metre of the dialogue resembles that of the popular ballads, and its blunt humor, directness, and naturalness make it one of the few life-like pastorals in literary history.



From a pen-and-ink sketch

FIG. 32. — "Whiles in arms plet."

Here is a stanza of the fable of *The Country Mouse and The Town Mouse:*

The hearty joy — Well, well, if you had sene —
Was kithit (known) when that these twa sisteris met,
And greit kyndenes was shown thame betwene;
For whiles they laughed, and whiles for joy they gret (wept),
Whiles kissit sweit, and whiles in arms plet (folded);
And thus they fared till soberit was thair mood,
Then foot for foot unto the chamber yude (went). — Stanza 5.

Among the well-known poems of Henryson it is doubtful if any are so popular as his thirteen fables, which may have been written between 1470 and 1480. In the guise of fables the kindly poet throws light upon the manners and customs of his time. He is quick to detect the real man behind the words and deeds. All of the fables are pictures of life drawn playfully, yet accurately, by a sympathetic observer of men and women as well as mice and poultry.

The Flying Man. — Did you ever wish that you were a bird? If you have ever been a child, then you have certainly been a bird more times than you might care to remember. From these fancies and dreams of childhood men have been working for hundreds of years, so that now most of us have seen airships or aeroplanes that fly like monstrous birds faster than a railroad train. It was William Dunbar who



FIG. 33. — Stirling Castle.

wrote the first poem about a flying machine. You can still hear him laughing at the unlucky Abbot of Tungland, or Tongland, a monastery whose remains may be seen in Galloway. The abbot tried to fly from the battlements of Stirling Castle, but he was born too soon, for his daring experiment was regarded as a joke. Here are a few lines of Dunbar's poem:

> And, when he saw that naught availed,
> A feathering on he took,

And schupe (made ready) in Turkey for to flee,
And when that he did mount on he (high)
All fowls forleit (wondered) what he should be
That ever did on him look.

The myttane (hawk) and Saint Martin's fowl (martin)
Thought he had bene the horned owl;
They set upon him with a yowle (yell),
And gave him dint (blow) for dint.
The cuckoo, cormorant, and gled (hawk)
Smote him with buffets till he bled;
The sparrow-hawk to the spring him sped,
As fierce as fire of flint.

He sheared his feathering that was schene (fine),
And slippit owt of it full clene,
And in a mire up to the ene (eyes),
Amang the glar (mud) did glide.
— *The Fenyeit Freir*, Stanzas 8–10.

William Dunbar (1460?–1520). — The fifteenth century was one of the most brilliant periods in Scottish history. Scotland has four universities, and this century marks the founding of the universities of St. Andrews, Glasgow, and Aberdeen. National peace brought prosperity, and prosperity brought leisure as well as encouragement for literature and the nobler things of life.

William Dunbar was born about 1460 in Lothian, a district which includes Edinburgh. At the University of St. Andrews he received his higher education. In 1491 he seems to have been a member of an embassy that visited France, Germany, and other countries. In 1501 he was again one of a company sent to England to arrange the marriage of James IV with the Princess Margaret. In 1511 Dunbar attended the Queen's reception at Aberdeen. About nine years later he was gone.

It will never do to take seriously all that Dunbar says about himself or others. A natural humorist, he often says the

very opposite of what he means. No doubt if he were living in the twentieth century his language at times might have been different, and yet his wit and his recklessness fail to hide the wealth of sentiment that lies underneath. In conciseness and in variety of metre he seems to surpass all earlier poets.

Four centuries have passed since Dunbar composed *The Dance of the Seven Deadly Sins* and ninety or a hundred other poems. They breathe that joy in being true to one's self, that joy in living, that joy in humanity, which we link with the Renaissance. With the hammer of imagination he shapes every form of European verse upon the anvil of his subtle brain, and always he works with the ease of genius.

Scott's Conception of Douglas. — Red and hot was the Douglas blood, which left its mark on many a battlefield of medieval Europe. Gavin Douglas was a poet, and this is his pen-portrait as it appears in Scott's *Marmion :*

> A bishop by the altar stood,
> A noble lord of Douglas blood,
> With mitre sheen and rocquet white;
> Yet showed his meek and thoughtful eye
> But little pride of prelacy;
> More pleased that, in a barbarous age,
> He gave rude Scotland Virgil's page,
> Than that beneath his rule he held
> The bishopric of fair Dunkeld. — Canto VI, 328–336.

Gavin Douglas (1474?–1522). — The birth-year of Italy's great poet Ariosto was 1474, which is supposed to be the year of the birth of Gavin Douglas. Douglas was the third son of Archibald, Earl of Angus, nicknamed Bell-the-Cat. Educated at the University of St. Andrews and on the Continent, young Douglas received his first church appointment in 1496. A little later he became rector of Prestonkirk near Dunbar, and here it was that he composed *The Palice*

of Honour, which was finished in 1501. He now became Dean or Provost of St. Giles in Edinburgh. It was during his connection with this church that he is supposed to have written *King Hart.* In 1512 he began his translation of Virgil, completing it the following year.



From an old print

FIG. 34. — Dunkeld Cathedral.

Douglas became involved in the tragic struggles of the Scottish barons. In 1515 he was chosen as bishop of Dunkeld. After release from a year's imprisonment he was one of three ambassadors sent to France. Later he was sent on a special mission to England, where he enjoyed the friendship of the famous Cardinal Wolsey. In 1522, the year in which a ship first sailed around the globe, Douglas died of the plague and was buried in London.

In some respects the outline of Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* resembles Douglas's *Palice of Honour,* an allegory which represents the dangers that have to be overcome before any one can attain true honor. Douglas's poem contains allusions to the themes of several popular ballads.

King Hart is another allegory. Descriptive of the heart of man, its plot is original, although the names of some of the characters first appear in *Piers Plowman.* On the approach of death King Hart makes his will. With sly humor he

bequeaths a broken shin and a bruised arm to his page Nimbleness, who in earlier years had encouraged his royal master to play football.

> This broken shin that swells and will not assuage,
> Ye bear to him; he brak it at the ball:
> And say to him that it shall be his wage.
> This bruised arm ye bear to him at all (as well).
> — Canto II, Stanza 63.

When Douglas translated Virgil's *Æneid* into verse, he was the first to present a great ancient classic in our language. He has caught the spirit of the New Learning, the spirit of the Renaissance, in a poem which does credit to his imagination as well as his scholarship. His landscape pictures, especially in the prologues to Virgil's books, are the outcome of his own observation. Another poet calls him, "In our English rhetoric the rose."

Sir Thomas More (1478–1535). — Like Douglas, Sir Thomas More, who was born at London in 1478, was a good classical scholar. Educated at Oxford and elsewhere, he gained fame as a man of letters by publishing in 1516 a romance called *Utopia* (Nowhere), which scarcely belongs to English literature, as it is written in Latin. Based largely upon Plato's *Republic*, More's book tells about an imaginary island whose democratic form of government is perfect. No one is rich and no one is poor, because all things are shared alike by all. Atheists are not allowed to hold public office.

Sir Thomas Wyatt (1503–1542). — At the beginning of this chapter we observed that the New Learning had its birth in Italy during the fourteenth century, reaching England through her universities, as seen in the work of More and others. Through her poetry Italy now directly influenced English literature, aided by Sir Thomas Wyatt and his

friend Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey. Both men had travelled in Italy and were trained to appreciate what they saw and heard.

Wyatt's birthplace was near Maidstone in Kent. This graduate of Cambridge was well liked at the court of Henry VIII, though like Douglas he was for a time a political prisoner. The king sent Wyatt on several missions to foreign countries, where he gained a first-hand knowledge of some of Europe's best literature. He tried to put Italian forms of verse into English. The sonnet was one of the poetic types which pleased him so well that he took it to England. All of us know that the sonnet is limited to fourteen lines, each of which must have five accented syllables, with the end-rimes in a certain order.

Earl of Surrey (1517?–1547). — Surrey's name is remembered because he was a pioneer in writing English blank verse. This form of verse is blank in the sense that it has no end-rime. In each line are five beats or accents. Surrey was an Oxford graduate, who for a time was popular with Henry VIII. In the war with France he served with distinction, yet like Sir Thomas More he lost favor and was beheaded. Sonnets and other new metres he wrote during leisure hours, but in preparing a mode of expression for Marlowe and Shakespeare and Milton, he achieved much. It was in blank verse that Surrey translated part of Virgil's *Æneid*, some of his lines being based upon Douglas's version.

In 1557, after both poets were dead, a printer named Tottel published a collection of verse called *Tottel's Miscellany*, containing the work of various authors. This was the first time that the general public had a chance of seeing the new style of verse composed by Wyatt, Surrey, and other writers of less consequence.

SUMMARY

1. The Transition period marks the gradual change from medieval to modern civilization. One of the chief causes of that change was the Revival of Learning, which implies a deeper appreciation of the literary and social value of the ancient classics of Greece and Rome. Humanism, merely another name for the New Learning, suggests that a thorough study of the ancient classics makes the student more human.

2. The Revival began in Italy, largely because Venice was the chief commercial seaport of Europe, and therefore most constantly in touch with the rest of the world, while Rome, as the headquarters of religion, constantly attracted thoughtful men of different nationalities. Italians began to take patriotic pride in the language and literature of the ancient Romans, who had received most of their culture from the Greeks.

3. Renaissance, a French word meaning new birth, involves more than the Revival of Learning. The revival of interest in the ancient classics extended to architecture, painting, and fine art in general. When the Revival of Learning began to affect social conditions, when it had taught men to exercise reason as well as imagination, it came to be known as the Renaissance.

4. Nothing extended the influence of the Renaissance so speedily as the invention of printing, an event which has transformed the world's literature.

5. James I of Scotland found time to write *The Kingis Quair*, an allegory concerning the English lady who became his queen.

6. In the best English prose of the fifteenth century Malory's *Morte d'Arthur*, based mainly on French romances, narrates stories about King Arthur and his knights. Caxton,

the earliest of English printers, published the works of Malory and other authors.

7. Pastoral poetry deals with shepherds or other people living in the country. Henryson's *Robene and Makyne*, the earliest of British pastorals, is one of the most natural ever written. His fables in verse are humorous and instructive.

8. Aeroplanes are rare even now, so it is rather surprising to find Dunbar, the most brilliant poet of his age, writing long ago about a man who tried to fly. He is a witty writer, although some of his poems are serious or sentimental.

9. Douglas, who is mentioned in Scott's *Marmion*, was the first man in Britain to translate Virgil's *Æneid* into verse, enlarging it with many original comments.

10. More's *Utopia* is in Latin prose, whereas Wyatt and Surrey preferred English verse. Wyatt wrote the earliest English sonnets, and Surrey introduced blank verse.

Test Questions

1. What is humanism? Distinguish between the Revival of Learning and the Renaissance. Why did the Revival begin in Italy?
2. State the purpose of *The Kingis Quair*. Why does the author refer to a hound?
3. What is the meaning of *Morte d'Arthur?* How did Malory's own experience help to fit him to write such a book?
4. What induced Caxton to interest himself in printing?
5. Who wrote the earliest pastoral in Britain? Did his profession help or hinder him in the composition of poetry?
6. Do you recall any of the birds that are said to have attacked the Flying Man? What is your opinion of Dunbar's poems?
7. Which of Douglas's works alludes to popular ballads? What has Douglas to say about football? Why should he be remembered by students of literature?
8. What form of government is set forth in More's *Utopia?*
9. In what sense may Wyatt and Surrey be regarded as pioneers?

ADDITIONAL AUTHORS WITH CHIEF WORKS

Thomas Occleve (1370?–1450?), *To Sir John Oldcastle;* John Lydgate (1370?–1451?), *London Lickpenny;* Andrew of Wyntoun (1395?–1424?), *Chronicle* (in verse); Reginald Pecock (1395?–1460), *The Repressor;* Richard Holland (flourished 1482), *Buke of the Howlat* (owl), written about 1450; Henry the Minstrel or Blind Harry (1430?–1492?), *Wallace,* written about 1480; John Skelton (1460?–1529), *Colin Clout;* Stephen Hawes (1475?–1523), *Pastime of Pleasure;* Alexander Barclay (1475?–1552), *Ship of Fools;* William Tyndale (1490?–1536), *The Bible,* a masterly translation.

SUPPLEMENTARY READING

Besides the general works already mentioned in previous chapters, the following books are recommended:

a. For Classes

E. K. Chambers, *English Pastorals,* N. Y. (Scribner's), $1.00.

G. Eyre-Todd, *Mediæval Scottish Poetry,* Glasgow (Hodge), $1.00.

Andrew Lang, *Tales of the Round Table,* N. Y. (Longmans), $.50.

A. T. Martin, *Selections from Morte d'Arthur,* N. Y. (Macmillan), $.50.

Howard Pyle, *Story of the Champions of the Round Table,* N. Y. (Scribner's), $2.00.

b. For Teachers and Others

W. D. Armes, *Utopia,* N. Y. (Macmillan), $.60.

L. Einstein, *Italian Renaissance in England,* N. Y. (Lemcke and Buechner), $1.50.

W. Pater, *The Renaissance,* N. Y. (Macmillan), $2.00.

A. W. Pollard, *Fifteenth Century Prose and Verse,* N. Y. (Dutton) and Westminster (Constable), $1.25.

G. H. Putnam, *Books and their Makers during the Middle Ages.* N. Y. (Putnam's), 2 vols., $2.50 ea.

J. E. Sandys, *Harvard Lectures on the Revival of Learning,* N. Y. (Putnam), $1.50.

F. J. Snell, *The Age of Transition,* N. Y. (Macmillan), 2 vols., $1.00 ea.

J. A. Symonds, *The Revival of Learning,* N. Y. (Scribner's), $2.00.

T. G. Tucker, *The Foreign Debt of English Literature,* N. Y. (Macmillan), $1.50.

CHAPTER VII

THE EARLY DRAMATIC PERIOD

If we live to learn, we learn to live; that is, we learn to get the best out of life. To help every one to get the best out of life, the church at one time employed the drama. In previous pages the drama has not been discussed, because it seemed better to glance at the growth of the early English drama in a single chapter.

What is Drama? — The word drama, first used by the ancient Greeks, means action or performance. Whether composed in verse or in prose, a drama is a story usually intended for the stage, where trained persons speak and act as if they were really the people mentioned in the story.

The essence of drama is to bring out the clash of one will with another. When the conflict becomes so serious that one or more of the leading characters lose their lives, the drama is called a tragedy. When the conflict ends more or less pleasantly, the play is usually called a comedy. These are the two chief classes of dramatic literature.

Children's Games. — Healthy young people enjoy a certain amount of play. Once in a while even older people welcome a little amusement as a change from hard work. In all countries, even among the Eskimos of the frozen northland, children have singing games accompanied by gestures or action of some sort. All over the world primitive tribes have dance songs at village festivals which take the place of our schools, churches, and theatres. On certain days of the

year some English villages still have outdoor games in which the people, young as well as old, tell a story through song and action or pantomime. Long before theatres were known, our forefathers had games or festivals open to everybody. Sometimes these festivals were religious, at other times they were simply for amusement.

The Church Service. — The church leaders were keen students of human nature, and they were well aware of the folk-dramas or village festivals, so common everywhere in Europe. When Christianity was introduced among the Britons and afterward among the Anglo-Saxons of England, the church service was usually conducted in a dignified manner, because the priests felt that the worship of God should be impressive. The church was regarded as the house of God. Hence arose noble cathedrals fitted to arouse a sense of reverence in the congregation. The celebration of the Lord's Supper was known as the Mass, and every effort was made to enhance its symbolism. The dramatization of the central mystery of the Christian faith was effected by action, by gesture, and by music.

Church Drama. — It was during Christmas and Easter, when the birth and the resurrection of Jesus were commemorated, that the church ceremonies became more dramatic. During the ninth and tenth centuries the beginnings of what we call drama became more or less apparent. As the clergy chanted responsively the Bible lesson in Latin and the choir burst into song at intervals, the whole sacred incident or story was brought before the people at public worship. As the dramatic element increased, naturally the people were attracted more and more. Suitable prologues or introductions from the Old Testament were introduced at the Christmas ceremonies, while the Easter and Ascension ceremonies began to have a sequel dealing with the Day of Judgment. Finally the Christmas and Easter ceremonies

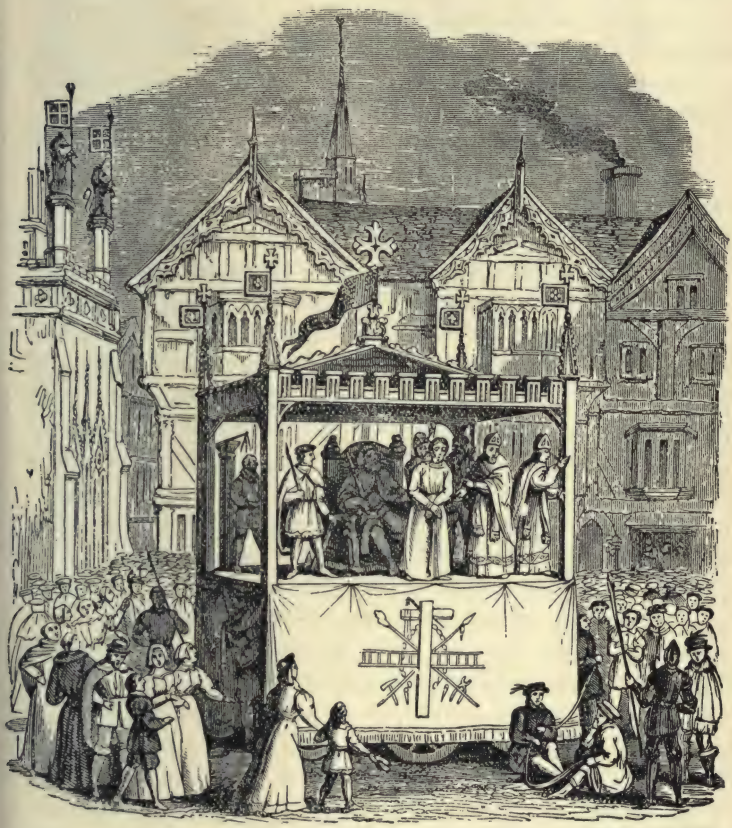
were joined so as to form a religious drama that set forth the principal scenes of Bible history as a whole.

Trade Guilds. — It was not until the fourteenth century that a real national drama began to appear in England. By that time the religious plays had become so popular that the churches could not take care of the crowds, and performances had to be given in the streets. In most towns the actors no longer were priests, but tradesmen or members of trade guilds. These guilds were societies of men engaged in the same business, such as masons, grocers, and fishermen. The guilds exercised great power in the cities. When the members took charge of the mystery plays, as the Scriptural plays were called, incidents and conversations, sometimes of an amusing nature, were introduced to make the Scripture scenes look more like scenes of everyday life. Plays of this character are known to have been acted at Aberdeen, York, Chester, and in many other places.

Some rough fun began to creep into the mystery plays, especially when Satan and some of the less important figures of the Bible were mentioned. Nevertheless it would be a great mistake to interpret either the intermingling of the tragic and the comic, or the occasional vulgarity of the language, as indicating general corruption. These features suggest an undeveloped rather than a corrupt society. The English people were morally sound, though they were at times coarse in habit and speech, after the manner of the time. The grossness was not a matter of character, but of expression.

Pageants. — The simplest sort of a pageant was a stage on wheels, although later the term pageant implied a splendid show or parade of any sort. If it belonged to the guild of fishermen, for instance, their business would be to represent Noah and the Ark, or any Bible scene connected with the sea. Usually there were two platforms, the upper of which was the real stage, the lower one being the actors' dressingroom.

Everything was arranged beforehand, so that each pageant knew when and where to go. The first pageant, for example,



From an old print

FIG. 35. — A Chester Pageant.

might represent the Creation of Man, and then move on to the second stopping-place where the same act was repeated. Meantime at the place which the first had left, the second

pageant might be acting the slaying of Abel. In this way at certain parts of the town every one had a chance to witness the entire set or cycle of plays. For more than two centuries the pageants or guild plays were very popular. In Shakespeare's boyhood they were still acted at Chester, their stage management proving of great use to the regular drama of later years.

Mystery Play in America. — Every one has heard of the Passion Play which attracts visitors from many lands to Bavaria, where every tenth year the passion or suffering of Jesus on the cross is impressively represented by the villagers of Oberammergau. Few, even in America, have heard of the mystery play performed in New England. In scene after scene, with music or speech accompanying the action, the birth of Jesus is set forth dramatically at the village of Pomfret in Connecticut. Catholics and Protestants unite to show the Christmas spirit of good will toward men, conducting the sacred drama with becoming dignity.

Miracle Plays. — Mystery plays are based upon passages of Scripture, whereas miracle plays deal with miracles or wonderful events in the lives of saints not mentioned in the Bible. Often, of course, no distinction is drawn between mystery and miracle plays. The earliest miracle or saint's play of England, the play of St. Katharine, was acted about 1100. It is the first English school play of which we have any record. The actors were schoolboys trained by their master Geoffrey, who was the author. For a long time the miracle play appealed to the people's love of romance.

Moral Plays. — Moral plays, also known as moralities or morality plays, date back to the fourteenth century. They are really acted allegories enlivened with music and scenery. Mystery plays and miracle plays have religious characters of flesh and blood, whereas the moral plays have moral or religious types such as are familiar to readers of Bunyan's

Pilgrim's Progress. Dealing as they did with subjects like the Lord's Prayer and the Creed, the moralities were almost obliged to personify the virtues and the vices of mankind. Although allegory is common enough in the literature of the ancient Greeks and Romans, yet it took a firmer hold of European literature during the Middle Ages.

The original purpose of the three forms of religious drama was to give the unlettered multitude clearer views of sacred story and belief. Many persons, however, crave amusement as well as education, and gradually the clergy had to engage the aid of others to satisfy the art instincts of the people, especially in the larger towns. After a time the moral plays adapted themselves to the popular taste by introducing comic scenes. Eventually these plays, as they grew less religious, became more fashionable until at length they formed one of the chief inspirations of Elizabethan comedy. In recent years the moral play of *Everyman* has been presented with much success on both sides of the Atlantic.

Interludes. — The typical interlude is a short farce or comedy acted by professional players at a formal banquet given by a person of distinction. At first the morality plays were used as interludes. Gradually an interlude became a moral play, shortened and adapted to please an aristocratic audience.

Stages were erected in the halls of palaces, castles, colleges, or in open spaces of towns. A glimpse of one of those halls might be more diverting than the interlude. There you would see ladies in silk and velvet robes, glittering with jewels and adorned with laces and feathers. There also you would see the courtiers with jewelled swords and coats of gay-colored satin.

Interlude Writers. — Among the more distinguished writers of interludes were Sir David Lyndsay (1490–1555), born near Cupar in Fifeshire, and John Heywood (1497?–

1580). Lyndsay's *Satire of the Three Estates*, composed in a variety of metre, seems to have been first acted before James V of Scotland at Linlithgow in 1540. It is a fearless political play, even brilliant in places, depicting the manners and customs of the period. Heywood's interludes are comparatively short. Much of his material is borrowed from France and from earlier English writers, yet his treatment is original and often amusing.



From Brandt's "Ship of Fools," 1519 version

FIG. 36. — Mendicants on their Travels.

Interlude Players. — Professional actors of the sixteenth century had no such social standing as they enjoy to-day. After the destruction of the monasteries by Henry VIII in 1536, mendicants, homeless wanderers, minstrels, strolling players of all kinds, began to be regarded with suspicion. In 1563 the Bishop of London described players as "an idle sort of people, who have been infamous in all good communities," and a little later it was enacted that all players who were not servants of barons or any greater lord of the realm should be punished as vagabonds. The result was that every company of strolling players was anxious to wear the livery of some nobleman, so that they might be able to earn a living without annoyance.

Interlude players were sometimes in the service of the king or the queen. The children or schoolboys, especially of St.

Paul's, acted under teachers as managers. Undergraduates of the universities also acted, at first in Latin.

The Devil and the Vice. — Serious enough is the Devil of the earlier English drama, although in later times he becomes abusive or sarcastic. In the moral plays he is neither witty nor sarcastic, but simply issues orders to his agents, the Vices. Moral plays of the first half of the sixteenth century have usually no Devil, yet he appears on the stage in all kinds of plays down to Elizabethan comedy.



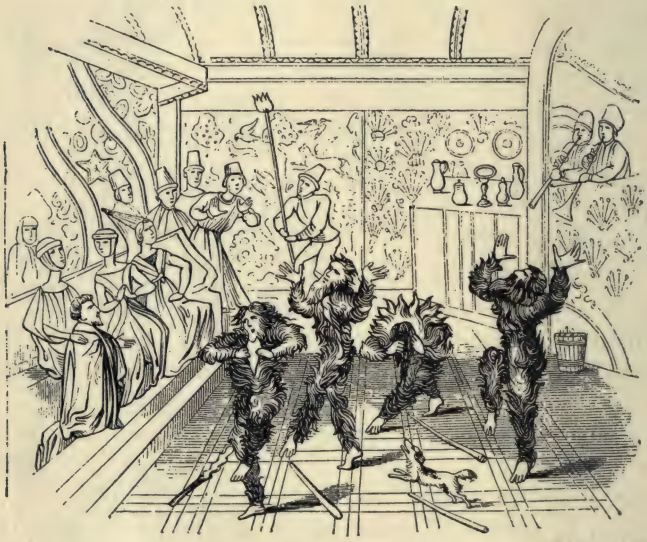
From a Trinity College, Cambridge MS.

FIG. 37. — The Master of the Seven Deadly Sins.

In moral plays the struggle is for possession of a human soul, the representatives of evil being the Seven Deadly Sins — anger, sloth, etc. — with their master, the Devil. Out of these Sins or Vices was created an allegorical figure called the Vice, who appears in moral plays and interludes. The Vice is chief servant of the World, the Flesh, and the Devil. Finally each of the Vices represents a particular sin, whereas *the* Vice embodies sins in general. The Vice is not derived from the Devil of the stage, nor does he always wait upon him. In early drama God's adversary is a fallen archangel, whereas the Vice typifies human frailty.

Masques. — At first a masque was a story told not in words, but through the actions of the masked or disguised players, who are sometimes known as mummers. That is, it was a sort of dumb show or pantomime. Like the inter-

lude it was played before aristocratic audiences, but unlike the interlude it had at first no professional players. The acting was performed by masked ladies and gentlemen, who posed and danced in splendid costumes for the private entertainment of their friends. Later the masques assumed a



Harleian MS.

FIG. 38. — Court Mummers.

literary form, verses being used to make the meaning of the acting more definite.

Latin Influence in Comedy. — Plautus and Terence were the two most popular writers of ancient Latin comedies. During the sixteenth century the works of these old playwrights were among the texts read in English schools and colleges. In the original Latin some plays were occasionally acted by students, as they still are at Westminster School. The interlude had developed mainly along the line of farce

or comedy, so that the people were ready to appreciate any amusing play which they could understand.

Nicholas Udall (1505–1556), an Oxford man who for a time was a master at Eton, wrote a riming play called *Ralph Roister Doister*. Familiar with Plautus as well as with the needs of the English stage, Udall divided his play into progressive acts and scenes, in this way greatly improving the form of English drama. He also introduced a more refined style of comedy after the old Roman models, though his characters are English. Ralph is a roisterer or noisy blustering person who thinks he is in love with a rich widow, and also is vain enough to fancy that all women are in love with him.

William Stevenson, who was born at Hunwick in Durham and died in 1575, may have written *Gammer Gurton's Needle*, which is one of the best-known comedies or farces of its time. The actors in Udall's play were probably his schoolboys; the actors in this play were students of a Cambridge college. Published in 1575 this comedy, like Udall's, is in five acts that follow the Latin rules. Udall's play deals with life in London, while *Gammer Gurton's Needle* illustrates the rougher merriment of an English village. The gammer or grandmother of the play has lost her needle, and the fun continues until it is found.

Latin Influence in Tragedy. — Good tragedy is more difficult to write than good comedy. Tragedy calls for characters of unusual earnestness and strength of will as well as a style that fits the greatness of the issue. It was the success of the imitations of Roman comedy that led scholarly men of letters to turn their attention to Roman tragedy, especially the plays of Seneca, who was tutor of the Emperor Nero. Only a select number of people at first cared for tragedy, and it, therefore, retained its classical features far longer than comedy. From Seneca came the ghost, the chorus, and the taste for unnatural crime.

The earliest English tragedy is *Gorboduc*, later known as *Ferrex and Porrex*. Written by Thomas Norton and Thomas Sackville (1536–1608), Earl of Dorset, it was performed before Queen Elizabeth in 1561. It is notable as the first English play composed in blank verse. Inasmuch as it contains pantomime, it is related to the aristocratic masque. Before each act a dumb show foreshadows what is to follow.



Fig. 39. — Thomas Sackville.

Gorboduc suggests Shakespeare's King Lear. He is supposed to be a monarch of ancient Britain, who has two sons, Ferrex and Porrex. He gives up the throne, dividing his kingdom into two parts. To the elder son he grants the southern portion, and to the younger the northern. The poor judgment of the king eventually brings national ruin.

SUMMARY

1. In early days when most people could neither read nor write, the priests tried to teach the lessons of the Bible by the aid of drama.

2. Drama, which means action, has tragedy and comedy as its two chief branches. Children's games sometimes resemble dramas because they tell a story through action as well as words.

3. The celebration of the Lord's Supper readily lends itself to dramatic treatment. Christmas and Easter ceremonies led to the formation of a big drama that set forth the chief scenes of Bible history.

4. In the fourteenth century the trade guilds began to help the priests in those religious plays, and it was then that such figures as Satan began to be associated with rough merriment.

5. At first a pageant was a stage on wheels, though later the term implied any splendid parade or show. A set or series of plays was called a cycle.

6. Mystery plays had scenes from the Bible; miracle plays dealt with miracles or wonders in the lives of saints not mentioned in the Bible; moral or morality plays had allegorical characters such as Truth or Anger.

7. Interludes were short plays acted by professional performers for the entertainment of rich people. Sir David Lyndsay and John Heywood were two of the best writers of interludes. Unless they wore the livery of some gentleman of influence, professional players were apt to be punished as vagabonds.

8. Masques were plays in which the aristocratic performers wore a mask or disguise of some sort.

9. Following the style of Plautus, Latin scholars began to develop English comedy. Of early comedies those best known are Udall's *Ralph Roister Doister* and Stevenson's *Gammer Gurton's Needle.*

10. Those who tried to improve English tragedy followed the style of Seneca. In blank verse Norton and Sackville wrote the earliest English tragedy, first known as *Gorboduc.*

Test Questions

1. What is drama? What is its object? Why did the early church employ it?
2. Distinguish between tragedy and comedy, and show the relationship of child games to drama.
3. What brought about the formation of a cycle of Scriptural plays? Who were the earliest actors in such plays?

4. In what way did the trade guilds affect the growth of national drama?

5. Distinguish between mystery, miracle, and morality plays.

6. What kind of plays came to be preferred by the more refined classes of society? Do you recall the name of any such play?

7. In what manner were schoolboys and college students sometimes connected with the stage? Can you give an example of a school or a college comedy acted in the sixteenth century?

8. In what respects did the study of Latin improve the English stage?

9. Why is tragedy harder to write than comedy? How was early English tragedy related to the masque?

ADDITIONAL AUTHORS WITH INTERLUDES

Henry Medwall, *Nature* (written prior to 1500); John Rastell, *Nature of the Four Elements* (printed in 1519); John Bale (1495–1563), *King John.* Bale was Bishop of Ossory in Ireland. One or two of his plays were acted at Kilkenny. L. Wager, *Marie Magdalene* (printed 1566); Thomas Ingeland, *The Disobedient Child* (acted 1560); Nathaniel Woods, *The Conflict of Conscience* (written 1563?).

SUPPLEMENTARY READING

Besides the works mentioned in the earlier chapters, some of the best books in English for teachers and others are:

K. L. Bates, *English Religious Drama,* N. Y. (Macmillan), $1.50.

C. F. T. Brooke, *Tudor Drama,* Bost. (Houghton), $1.50.

E. K. Chambers, *Mediæval Stage,* N. Y. (Oxford Press), 2 vols., $7.50.

H. E. Evans, *English Masques,* N. Y. (Scribner's), $1.00.

C. M. Gayley, *Representative English Comedies,* N. Y. (Macmillan), 2 vols., Vol. I, $2.00.

S. B. Hemingway, *English Nativity Plays,* N. Y. (Holt), $2.00.

C. H. Herford, *Studies in the Literary Relations of England and Germany* (16th century), N. Y. (Putnam's), $2.50.

D. Laing, *Lyndsay's Poetical Works,* Edinburgh (Paterson).

W. R. Mackenzie, *English Moralities from the Point of View of Allegory,* Bost. (Ginn), $2.00.

J. M. Manly, *Specimens of the Pre-Shakespearean Drama,* Bost. (Ginn), 2 vols., $1.25 ea.

Brander Matthews, *The Development of the Drama*, N. Y. (Scribner's), $1.25.

A. W. Pollard, *Miracle Plays*, etc., 5th ed., N. Y. (Oxford Press), $1.90.

F. E. Schelling, *Elizabethan Drama*, Bost. (Houghton), 2 vols., $3.50.

L. T. Smith, *York Plays*, N. Y. (Oxford Press), $6.75.

J. A. Symonds, *Shakespeare's Predecessors*, etc., N. Y. (Scribner), $2.00.

A. H. Thorndike, *Tragedy*, Bost. (Houghton), $1.50.

A. W. Ward, *History of English Dramatic Literature*, 2d ed., N. Y. (Macmillan), 3 vols., $9.00. (To death of Queen Anne.)

CHAPTER VIII

THE SHAKESPEAREAN PERIOD

1564–1616

"LAND!" was the signal of a Spanish seaman on board the *Pinta* at two o'clock of an October morning in 1492. It was Columbus, a daring Italian captain, who piloted three small Spanish vessels across the unknown Atlantic to an island which he fittingly called San Salvador, Holy Savior. Thirty years after America was discovered, a Portuguese ship had sailed round the globe.

Love of Adventure. — The desire for new lands to conquer, the craving for adventure, has lured many a bold man since those days, and still a few parts of the globe remain unknown and uncharted. The gold mines of some of the American tribes soon made Spain the richest country in Europe. In 1577 Drake, an English seaman, sailed round the world, returning with much Spanish gold to England, where he was knighted by Queen Elizabeth. In 1586 Cavendish made a voyage round the world, plundering Spanish treasure-ships with the same success as Drake. Two years later a Spanish fleet, known as the *Armada*, sought revenge against Cavendish, Drake, and others in the English Channel. Events of this nature were bound to quicken the pulse and stir the imagination of our European forefathers.

As one of the results of the Renaissance the old Latin comedies of Terence and Plautus were serving as models for every playwright of western Europe. Coloring these plots

came the love of adventure, which is another phrase for love of romance. In England this blend of romance with comedy first bears fruit through the dramas of Lyly and Greene.

Religious Changes. — When the Wars of the Roses had ceased in 1486, the power of the English nobles had been crippled. Some of the impoverished barons had to sell part of their lands to merchants who had made money in trade, and in this way arose what are generally called the middle classes of society. Henry VII (1485–1509) did not have to consider the wishes of influential noblemen, and his son Henry VIII became practically an absolute monarch, that is, his will was law. In 1521 the latter wrote a book against Luther, the leader of those who were dissatisfied with the church in Germany. Thirteen years later, thirty years before Shakespeare was born, Henry declared himself to be the head of the church in England. Within four years more than seven hundred monasteries and colleges were annexed to the crown, and many of the valuable libraries were destroyed. Trouble continued for many a long year. Naturally the religious and political changes tended to bring some changes into English literature.

1. *NON-DRAMATIC WRITINGS*

During the first twenty years of Elizabeth's reign (1558–1603) no book of much consequence was composed either in prose or in verse. By sheer force of talent earlier writers like Malory had once in a while produced good prose, but the truth is that English prose was usually a rather awkward imitation of Latin or some other language. For centuries Latin had been regarded as the language in which an educated gentleman should write, and many experiments had to be made by writers now scarcely known, before English prose acquired the ease or naturalness of verse.

Ascham and Lyly. — The prose of men who thought in Latin and wrote in plain English is well illustrated by such a work as the *Schoolmaster* of Roger Ascham (1515–1568), a graduate of the University of Cambridge. A strong contrast to Ascham is John Lyly (1554?–1606), an Oxford graduate. Lyly's *Euphues*, published in 1572, is written in a fanciful affected style that seems to follow Spanish models. For instance, Lady Flavia says,

> It is time that you break off your speech, lest we have nothing to speak, for should you wade any farther, you would both waste the night and leave us no time, and take our reasons, and leave us no matter; that everyone therefore may say somewhat, we command you to cease.

Strange as it may seem, Lyly's *Euphues* was one of the most successful books ever written in English, and its ornate style became the fashion with Elizabeth and her literary court. In *Love's Labour's Lost* and in the first part of *Henry IV* Shakespeare makes some clever hits at what is often called Euphuism.

Sir Philip Sidney (1554–1586)

Outline of his Career. — Sidney is one of the noblest and most attractive characters in the literary history of Europe. After attending Oxford he completed his education by travelling on the continent. When he returned to England, he was presented to Elizabeth by his uncle, the Earl of Leicester, the Queen's chief favorite. Those who have read Scott's *Kenilworth* will have some idea of what Sidney witnessed when he was present at the royal festivities. Every one is familiar with the closing scene in the career of this ideal gentleman, who was beloved by the poor as well as the rich.

The English were besieging Zutphen in the Netherlands, which at that time belonged to Spain. In the mist of a

September morning of the year 1586 an army of Spaniards arrived to relieve the town. Sidney performed many feats of valor in the battle that followed. While leading a cavalry charge against a superior force, he was mortally wounded by a musket bullet from the Spanish trenches, and he fell from his war-horse. He had asked for water, a luxury hard to obtain on a battle-field. He was about to raise the cup to his lips, when he saw the eyes of a dying soldier fixed upon it longingly. "Thy necessity is greater than mine," said Sidney, and without even tasting the precious liquid, he handed the cup to his suffering comrade. It was chivalry of this sort that gave Sidney a reputation as a man which has lasted for more than three hundred years.



Portrait by Grosch

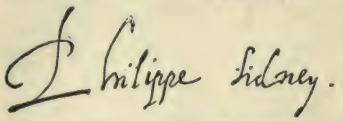


FIG. 40. — Sir Philip Sidney.

The Arcadia. — It is his prose rather than his sonnets and other poems that gives Sidney a place in literary history. None of his verse or prose was printed till after his death, although he had a reputation as a writer during his lifetime through the circulation of his works in manuscript form.

The *Arcadia*, of which a copy was published in 1590, was written to please his sister. It is a romance of chivalry in the pastoral style that was fashionable in Spain. The lyrics, printed along with the prose of the *Arcadia*, are translations

from Spanish. Sidney's shepherds are merely gentlemen like himself, " princely shepherds," as he calls them. Arcadia is a land that exists only in the writer's fancy, and although the book has no definite plot, it contains some fine descriptions. According to our modern taste the sentences are too long, but terseness was not a characteristic of the age in which Sidney lived.

Apologie for Poetrie. — In 1595 appeared Sidney's *Apologie for Poetrie,* wherein he holds that the main purpose of poetry is " to lead and draw us to as high a perfection as our degenerate souls, made worse by their clay lodgings, can be capable of." In discussing the various kinds of poetry he says of current Comedy that " naughty play-makers and stage-keepers have made it justly odious." Sidney also laughs in a good-natured way at the " swelling phrases " of Lyly and the men who wrote verses in the belief that they were true poets. The book as a whole has no little sincerity and freshness of outlook.

Experiments in Verse. — In the sixth chapter we observed that in the time of Henry VIII Surrey and Wyatt had made use of Italian metres, although Italy was too far away to influence England as strongly as she influenced France and Spain. The New Learning, with its lively appreciation of Greek and Latin models, enticed many a man to produce translations or to attempt imitations in verse after the style of the ancient classics. Many of those experiments in verse were dull and are now almost forgotten, yet they were not without value. Neither Julius Cæsar nor Napoleon could have won a single battle without the help of men whose names are no longer remembered. By showing the new possibilities of the mother tongue the efforts of the less important writers prepared the way for success in drama as well as in other forms of literature. People of refinement had been studying poetry, and they were ready to welcome

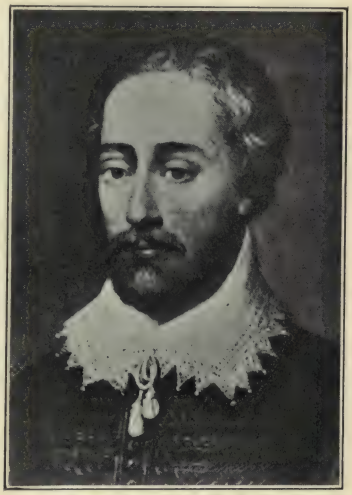
a really good poet, as Sidney and his friend Spenser discovered.

Edmund Spenser (1552?–1599)

Spenser had abundance of good sense. Well did he know the value of a thorough education, so we are sure he was jesting when he asked —

> Why did my parents send me to the schools,
> That I with knowledge might enrich my mind,
> Since the desire to learn first made men fools?

Spenser's Career. — Tasso, the great epic poet of Italy, was a boy of eight when Edmund Spenser was born in London, probably in 1552. His youth was passed in an England clouded by religious disputes. At the age of twenty-four he left Cambridge with a master's degree. Later he was introduced to Sir Philip Sidney, whose friendship led Spenser to dedicate to him the *Shepherd's Calendar*.



From engraving by W. H. Worthington

Fig. 41. — Edmund Spenser.

In 1580, Spenser was appointed secretary to Grey, the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland. Six years later the poet received 3000 acres of confiscated land in County Cork as well as Kilcolman Castle, situated between Mallow and Limerick. Among " the green alders by the Mulla's shore "

he wrote much of the *Faerie Queene*. Hither on a visit to his Irish estates came the brilliant Walter Raleigh, then a captain in the Queen's Guard. Spenser read the first three books of the *Faerie Queene* to Raleigh, who was so pleased that he induced the poet to return with him to London. The voyage is described in a poem where Raleigh figures as the "Shepherd of the Ocean." Spenser was presented to Elizabeth by Raleigh, and when the first part of Spenser's masterpiece was published in 1590, it made him instantly famous.

The poet sailed back to Ireland, and in 1594 he married. The outcome was a number of sonnets as well as the *Epithalamion*, the noblest marriage ode in our language. In 1596 he crossed to England in order to publish the second part of his masterpiece and returned to the castle in the southeast of Ireland. Kilcolman Castle overlooked a beautiful lake, set like a gem in a plain encircled by mountain ranges. In the autumn of 1598 the poet was driven out of the former castle of the Earl of Desmond. Only a few weeks later in London Spenser died impoverished, too proud to accept the gold offered him by Lord Essex. The poet was laid to rest in Westminster Abbey.



FIG. 42. — Kilcolman Castle.

The Shepherd's Calendar. — In 1579 Spenser published his *Shepherd's Calendar*, wherein the whole of England is supposed to be a sort of sheep farm under the sway of "Fair

Eliza," daughter of Pan, the ancient classic god of shepherds. It is a series of twelve pastoral poems, one for each month. Professing to be inspired by Virgil and the Italian pastorals, the *Shepherd's Calendar* is clearly traceable to the same Spanish book that aided Sidney with his *Arcadia.* In the form of allegory, rich in fancy, the poet introduces the questions of the day in a variety of wonderfully melodious verse. Here are two lines worth memorizing:

> For he that strives to touch a star
> Oft stumbles at a straw. — 99–100.

Plan of the Faerie Queene. —

> Arrived there, the little house they fill,
> Ne looke for entertainment where none was;
> Rest is their feast, and all things at their will.
> The noblest mind the best contentment has.
> With faire discourse the evening so they pas;
> For that olde man of pleasing wordes had store
> And well could file his tongue as smooth as glas:
> He told of Saintes and Popes, and evermore
> He strowed (strewed) an Ave-Mary (prayer) after and before.
>
> — Canto I, Stanza 35.

The foregoing stanza is from the first canto of the first book of Spenser's *Faerie Queene.* This work of genius is not an epic but an allegorical romance concerning the state of England, Ireland, and the Continent during Elizabeth's reign. The poet intended to write twelve books or sections of the *Faerie Queene,* but like Chaucer he was unable to complete his plan.

Whatever unity the six books of the poem possess is due to the conflict of Good, as Spenser conceived it, against Evil. Each virtue is personified by a knight, whose adventures shall teach it by example. Arthur represents all "private virtues." The Red Cross Knight, who stands for Holiness,

is wearing the armor described by St. Paul, the same armor with which Bunyan in later years equips Christian as well as Greatheart. Spenser urges that it is the poet's business to strive for " the winning of the mind from wickedness to virtue."

It is the Red Cross Knight who is the hero in the adventure of the first and finest book. Following a suggestion of the Italian epic of Tasso, Sir Guyon or Temperance is the chief figure in the second book. The third book contains some exquisite pictures of womanhood, colored with the radiance of poetic fancy.

In addition to its moral scheme the poem has a political meaning. The Faerie Queene is, first, Glory in general. In the next place she is Gloriana, the " most virtuous and beautiful " Queen Elizabeth. Arthur, the type of a true knight, sees the vision of the Queen, whom he resolves to follow to Fairyland. Arthur is really the Earl of Leicester.

Written at Intervals. — In estimating the work of Spenser we must remember that Elizabeth enjoyed a certain amount of flattery, and he was politic enough to try to win her favor. He never enjoyed the peaceful leisure of a Tennyson or a Browning. Most of his poetry and prose was written during the eighteen years that he spent as an official of the English government in war-smitten Ireland. No wonder the *Faerie Queene* seems at times to be disconnected, for its author had to compose it at intervals. During the first two books the course of the allegory runs clear, and then it becomes confused. In spite of this the poem may be enjoyed simply as a poem. Often it is better to ignore the hidden meanings. Spenser's true ideal is Beauty, the hidden beauty of the world in which we live or the world of which we dream. It is the gleam of Beauty that he follows as he wanders with ladies and knights through enchanted forests with their dragons, dwarfs, and other marvels of poetic Fairyland.

Spenserian Metre. — The Spenserian stanza with its three rimes, a specimen of which has already been given, contains nine lines with five accented syllables in each line, except the ninth, which has six stressed syllables. It is the poet's own invention. Its cadence has been compared to the swelling wave of a summer sea as it sweeps onward — a green transparent wall — until it breaks upon the pebbly shore in long and measured flow. Byron and other poets have proved the power of the majestic Spenserian stanza.

Its Value For Us. — It is not ideas but ideals that promote the progress and happiness of the human race, and no poet is more idealistic than Spenser. Ideas are but steps in the ladder of progress upward to the ideal. Like Longfellow in his *Excelsior*, Spenser deals with things that are, in order to help us toward what ought to be. Poetry is of value so far as it fixes, in forms of immortal beauty, whatever intelligent people are capable of feeling.

To-day many people care little for allegory, and the result is that Spenser is not read so much as his genius warrants. In order to make his verse more impressive and dignified he purposely uses many old-fashioned words, and this is another reason why he is not so popular as other poets of less ability. The fact remains, however, that Spenser has probably inspired more poets than any other man who ever wrote in English. By the magic of his melody, the perfection of his metre, and the force of his imagination he made an enchanted world out of this solid earth.

Four brief extracts may serve to show the gems that await patient readers of the *Faerie Queene :*

> Let me you entrete
> For to unfold the anguish of your hart;
> Mishaps are master'd by advice discrete,
> And counsell mitigates the greatest smart.
>
> — Bk. I, Canto 7.

And when she spake,
Sweete wordes, like dropping honey, she did shed;
And twixt the pearls and rubies softly brake
A silver sound, that heavenly musicke seem'd to make.
— Bk. II, Canto 3.

True is, that whilome (once) that good poet sayd,
The gentle minde by gentle deeds is knowne,
For a man by nothing is so well bewray'd
As by his manners, in which plaine is showne
Of what degree and what race he is growne.
— Bk. VI, Canto 3.

Francis Bacon (1561–1626)



From painting by Paul von Somer. National Portrait Gallery

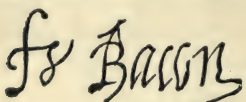


Fig. 43. — Francis Bacon.

York House, one of the finest mansions in London, was the childhood home of Francis Bacon. His father was a man of influence at the court of Elizabeth, and his mother was the sister-in-law of Cecil, Lord Burleigh, the queen's chief adviser. For a time he was a student at the University of Cambridge. From France he returned home in 1579 on account of the death of his father. He studied law and was called to the bar in 1582. Two years later he entered Parliament, where he soon distinguished himself as a public speaker. When the queen turned against one of her favorites, the rash Earl of Essex, Bacon led in his prosecu-

tion for treason. Unpleasant indeed must have been such a task, for Essex had been a loyal and generous friend of Bacon.

Bacon's highest political honors and practically all of his literary work belong to the reign of James I. By the year 1618 he had become Lord High Chancellor of England with the title of Baron Verulam. He was Viscount of St. Alban's in 1621. That very year his political foes accused him of taking bribes. He was sentenced to pay a fine of £40,000 and to be imprisoned in the Tower of London during the king's pleasure. James generously remitted the fine and set the ruined lawyer free.

It is not easy to be fair toward all our own acquaintances. It is still less easy to be just toward a man who lived three hundred years ago. Bacon possessed one of the keenest minds in Europe, yet his great intellect and his knowledge of the world failed to save him from disgrace. What led to this tragedy? He was not a bad man, but he had one life-long weakness — extravagance. He lived beyond his means, and he died in debt.

Bacon's Essays. — To-day Bacon is best known through his *Essays*, a form of prose which first appeared in the French writings of Montaigne. Any one who has a taste for politics will enjoy Bacon's essays. Even if we care nothing about politics, these fifty-eight sketches are well worth reading because they were written by a man who had a shrewd knowledge of mankind. With many touches of dry humor Bacon tells much in few words, and so compressed is his style that it is at times a little difficult for beginners. They are probably the most concise essays ever written in English or in any other language.

The New Atlantis. — Blown out of its course, a ship is steered through strange waters. An unknown land looms out of the horizon. It turns out to be Bensalem, a place not

marked upon any map. Far apart its inhabitants "dwell in the midst of the wash of the waves." The kindly people have founded an ideal university called Solomon's House, an institution far superior to any European university. The people desire Light, the light of knowledge, rather than wealth. More called his ideal country Utopia. Bacon calls this one the New Atlantis. It reminds him of the old Atlantis mentioned by Plato, a land that had disappeared from the knowledge of the rest of the world. *The New Atlantis*, an unfinished romance, ranks in popularity next to the *Essays*.

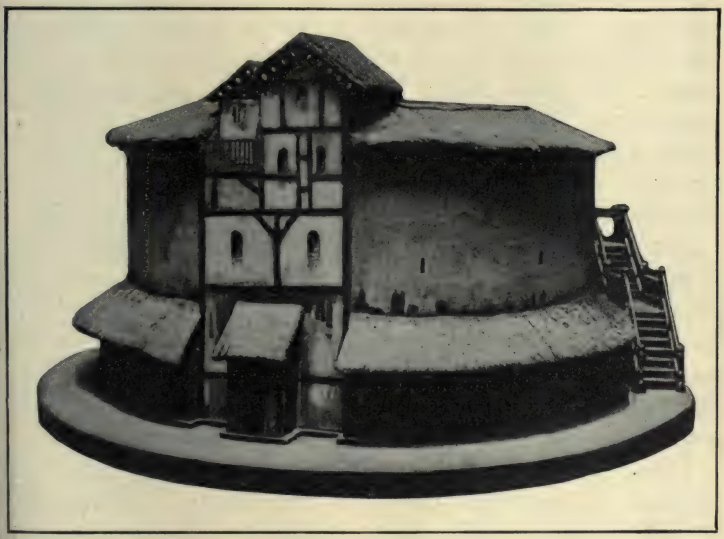
Other Works. — In English Bacon wrote *The Advancement of Learning* and a *History of Henry VII*. The former is a sort of introduction to Bacon's idea of how to promote human knowledge. His *Novum Organum*, which means New Instrument, that is, new means or method of learning, is in Latin. At that time Latin was read and spoken by most European scholars. This work explains the inductive method of reasoning. In other words, it shows that Bacon believed in the method of experiment with a view to finding out the real facts.

2. *DRAMATIC WRITINGS*

Spanish Influence in England. — During Elizabeth's reign the Spanish nation surpassed all other nations in political power, and it possessed a vigorous native drama. Frequently the natural pride of the Spaniards was represented in other countries as boastfulness or insolence. Spanish braggarts and cowards are by no means rare on the Elizabethan stage. Through translations Spanish literature was bound to leave some impress upon English writers. At times the framework of a Spanish story was borrowed and clothed with English feeling. Spain was enjoying her heroic age, and it may have been her imperial ideals rather than her literature that made

a profound impression upon the national aspirations of England.

The First English Theatre. — In 1576, twenty-three years before the Globe Theatre was erected south of the river Thames, the first English playhouse was built by James Burbage, whose son Richard was a close friend of Shake-



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FIG. 44. — Shakespeare's Globe Theatre, burned down in 1613.

speare. The Common Council of London, inclined to be Puritanic, made it difficult to perform public plays within the city. Burbage, who was a carpenter or joiner before he became an actor, built a circular wooden theatre at Shoreditch outside the city limits. As an actor he had often been in the chambers and halls of noblemen and in the inn-yards. His notion of decoration came from the baronial halls, and the galleries of this theatre were modelled after

those of the inns. The Theatre, as he called it, would be its own advertisement. It could be easily seen from Finsbury Fields, where archers engaged in target practice, lads played games, and maidservants bleached the family washing.

Do you see the playhouse flag being hoisted? The performance is about to begin, so let us enter. The pit or ground space has neither seats nor flooring, and the open sky is overhead. These are people of wealth that are sitting in the galleries round the pit, and a few are even sitting on the stage. The stage, which projects into the pit, has pillars supporting "the players' house," whose balcony may represent a window, a castle, or a prison, at the will of the performers. Above that you can see "the heavens" and a thatched roof, similar to that which overhangs the galleries.

Printing of Plays. — When an author sold his drama, the purchaser might hand it to another writer with orders to alter it as seemed best. In recent years much time has been spent in trying to find out which author or authors wrote certain parts of a drama. Actors did not always wish to print plays which they owned, because publication would make it easy for other companies to use the same plays.

John Lyly (1554?–1606). — The name of Lyly, author of *Euphues,* is mentioned earlier in this chapter. From 1580 to 1593 he wrote eight plays containing some good songs. His plays, seven of which are in prose, were not intended for performance by men in the public theatre. Boy-actors played before the Queen, who evidently enjoyed Lyly's classical stories, tinged as they were with political allegory. Romantic comedies such as *The Woman in the Moon* are not without refinement and cleverness. In *Love's Labour's Lost* Shakespeare followed in Lyly's footsteps, coloring comedy with romance.

Thomas Kyd (1558?–1594). — In blank verse Thomas Kyd, a Londoner, produced work that is an enormous ad-

vance upon plays such as *Gorboduc*. Tragedy was anything but popular before Kyd put *The Spanish Tragedy*, with its modern story of love and political intrigue, on the English stage. His tragedy may at times more correctly be called melodrama, in which emphasis is laid upon emotion rather than upon the development of character. Kyd knew how to relieve the horrors of the main tragedy, and he not only caught the public fancy, but he and Marlowe pointed the way to the greater triumphs of later tragedy.

George Peele (1558?–1598?). — George Peele, a graduate of Oxford, wrote lyrics that are tuneful, and to him the well-chosen word came easily. Shakespeare quotes some of his lines. Peele certainly improved the quality of English blank verse through his plays, one of the best of which is *David and Bethsabe*, published in 1599. There is tenderness in the passage that depicts the mourning of the king over his son Absalom :

> Touch no hair of him,
> Not that fair hair with which the wanton winds
> Delight to play, and love to make it curl,
> Wherein the nightingales would build their nests,
> And make sweet bowers in every golden tress,
> To sing their lover every night to sleep.

Robert Greene (1560?–1592). — When Robert Greene, a master of English romantic comedy, apparently ventured to call Shakespeare " an upstart crow beautified with our feathers," little did he know how many enemies he would make for three centuries thereafter. Greene left his native town of Norwich for Cambridge, where he graduated in 1578. With equal ease he wrote prose and verse, producing some of the finest lyrics of his time. The central feature of all his plays is love, a love which has as its object a pure unselfish heroine, quick with jests to conceal her emotion. Greene's heroes are never passive like those of Lyly's plays. Almost every

incident counts for something in carrying out the complete action of the drama. In plays such as *The Merchant of Venice* Shakespeare followed Greene in regarding romantic comedy as the struggle of love against opposing circumstances.

Written in blank verse, *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay* is a humorous treatment of a theme resembling Marlowe's *Faustus*. This popular play strives to bring out the superiority of Roger Bacon, English scientist or magician, over the German Faustus.

Christopher Marlowe (1564–1593)

If all the pens that ever poets held
Had fed the feeling of their masters' thoughts,
And every sweetness that inspir'd their hearts,
Their minds, and muses on admirèd themes;
If all the heavenly quintessence they still
From their immortal flowers of poesy,
Wherein, as in a mirror, we perceive
The highest reaches of a human wit;
If these had made one poem's period,
And all combin'd in beauty's worthiness,
Yet should there hover in their restless heads
One thought, one grace, one wonder, at the least,
Which into words no virtue can digest.

— Act V, Sc. ii.

Here is the vision of beauty in Marlowe's *Tamburlaine*, the longing to attain the ideal, that led the poet on to accomplish better work than English drama had ever known. This is real poetry because it has the beauty of sincerity fitly expressed.

Few dates in the history of the modern world are more notable than 1564, the birth-year of Marlowe and Shakespeare, not to speak of Galileo, the Italian astronomer. Christopher Marlowe, a native of Canterbury, was twenty-three years of age when he took his master's degree at Cam-

bridge. Though both writers were born in the same year, Marlowe's work was finished before Shakespeare had produced his greatest plays.

Marlowe's Tragedies. — Marlowe's literary reputation rests upon four tragedies, the earliest of which is *Tamburlaine.* The first part of it was acted about 1587. The hero, whose name is that of the play, is a fierce Asiatic conqueror. *Dr. Faustus* is also named after its leading character, a magician borrowed by Marlowe from Germany. Faustus sells his soul to Satan in order to gratify his passion for power, not of the sword, but of magic. He became more familiar than any German character in English literature. In *The Jew of Malta* Barabas represents passion for wealth. The Jew, who is badly treated, has a beautiful daughter converted to Christianity, but he does not claim our sympathy like Shylock in Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice. Edward II* is better constructed than the other tragedies, and it rises far above any earlier historical play of England. This is how the unfortunate king addresses Leicester:

> Leicester, if gentle words might comfort me,
> Thy speeches long ago had eas'd my sorrows;
> For kind and loving hast thou always been.
> The griefs of private men are soon allay'd,
> But not of kings. The forest deer, being struck,
> Runs to an herb that closeth up the wounds;
> But when the imperial lion's flesh is gor'd,
> He rends and tears it with his wrathful paw.
>
> — Act V, Sc. i.

Marlowe's Literary Qualities. — Blank verse is more elastic than rime and more dignified than prose. Others had used blank verse before Marlowe, but he employed it so happily that Shakespeare and others did not hesitate to follow in his footsteps. Though the scope of Marlowe's work is narrower than that of Shakespeare, still we ought

not to forget that all his work was done before he was thirty. Even if we admit that his plots are loose in framework, the splendor of his diction and the passion of his verse stamp him as one of the greatest writers of the Shakespearean period.

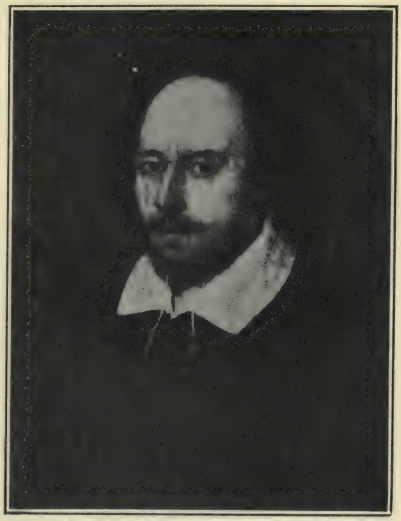
William Shakespeare (1564–1616)

The current that with gentle murmur glides,
Thou know'st, being stopped, impatiently doth rage;
But when his fair course is not hindered,
He makes sweet music with the enamell'd stones,
Giving a gentle kiss to every sedge
He overtaketh in his pilgrimage,
And so by many winding nooks he strays
With willing sport to the wild ocean.
— *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, Act II, Sc. vii.

Earlier Years. — In none of the plays is there a more vivid sketch of the characteristics of the river Avon, near whose west bank the future dramatist first drew breath on an April day in 1564. John Shakespeare, whose wife's maiden name had been Mary Arden, lived in what is now Henley Street at Stratford-on-Avon. Between 1569 and 1580 we know that young Shakespeare had opportunities of seeing professional actors at Stratford, including companies such as the Queen's, the Earl of Leicester's, and the Earl of Derby's. William was one of eight children. No doubt the lad attended the local Grammar School, whose teachers were able to train him in the elements of Latin. In later years one of his favorite books seems to have been the second edition of the *Chronicles* of Raphael Holinshed, who, like Shakespeare, was a native of Warwickshire.

Later Years. — A short walk from Stratford takes us to a little village at the far end of which is part of a house that Shakespeare visited. It was the home of Anne Hathaway, whom he married toward the close of 1582. By the time that

he was twenty-five, Lyly, Peele, and Greene had staged literary comedies with success, while Kyd and Marlowe had raised tragedy higher than it had been since it flourished in ancient Athens.



From the Chandos Portrait, National Portrait Gallery

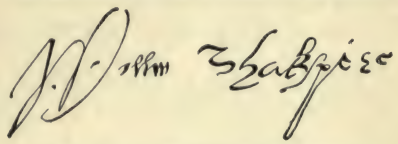


FIG. 45. — William Shakespeare.

About a hundred miles away is London. We know not when or why Shakespeare went there, but apparently he began his dramatic career by altering and improving plays owned by James Burbage's company of actors. By the year 1592 Shakespeare's own plays aroused the envy of Robert Greene, who called the young man from Warwickshire "an upstart crow." In the following year the youthful Earl of Southampton became his patron. Shakespeare, Richard Burbage, son of James, and others played twice before the Queen during the Christmas season of 1594.

Sir Hugh Clopton, who died in 1497, was the builder of "a praty house of bricke and tymbre" next to the Stratford parish church. This was the New Place bought by Shakespeare in 1597. Unfortunately this house, in which he said good-by to the world, was pulled down in 1757 by a person named Gastrell. Prosperity had come to Shakespeare, for

in 1596 his father applied to the College of Heralds. Three years later the heralds granted a coat of arms, thus giving the Shakespeares the title of gentlemen. When the poet's granddaughter, Lady Barnard, died in 1670, the family became extinct.



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FIG. 46. — New Place and Holy Trinity.

Richard II and *Love's Labour's Lost*, issued in 1598, are the first plays that have Shakespeare's name on the title page. That same year Francis Meres, a well-known scholar, published a list of twelve Shakespearean plays. Of course, the list may not be accurate. There is no evidence that he consulted the playwright, who at that time seems to have resided with a family called Mountjoy [1] at the corner of Silver and Muggle streets in London. Next year Shakespeare was a stockholder in the new Globe Theatre on the south side of the river Thames.

[1] This is one of the discoveries of Professor C. W. Wallace of the University of Nebraska.

Two months after Elizabeth's death in 1603, her successor James I specially favored Shakespeare and his theatrical friends by making the Globe actors the King's Company of Players. Thereafter the greatest masterpieces of the English drama were produced. In 1610 Shakespeare became a stockholder in Burbage's other theatre, the Blackfriars. Lucky it was for them that they owned it, for in 1613 the Globe burned down in the midst of a performance of *Henry VIII*. James I helped to rebuild the Globe, and it opened with renewed splendor.

The Last Sleep. — For the last time the light hazel eyes of Shakespeare closed in his fifty-second year:

> Fast asleep? It is no matter;
> Enjoy the honey-dew of slumber:
> Thou hast no figures nor no fantasies,
> Which busy care draws in the brains of men;
> Therefore thou sleep'st so sound.
>
> — *Julius Cæsar*, Act II, Sc. i.

Above the elms and the lime-trees rises the tall gray spire of Holy Trinity, in the chancel of which lies our most illustrious dramatist. A flat stone guards his tomb, and a niche in the wall above holds a bust of him whose noble forehead and shapely oval features are so familiar. In the hush of evening the Avon, as it sweeps between its willowy banks, still croons a lament.

Shakespeare as a Man. — The testimony of chief value is that of men who knew Shakespeare and his friends. Henry Chettle, who in 1592 had published Greene's attack on Shakespeare, apparently apologized that same year in his *Kind-Harts Dreame*. He remarks, "Myselfe have seene his demeanor no lesse civill than he exelent in the qualitie (profession) he professes: Besides, divers (different people) of worship (worth) have reported his uprightnes of dealing, which argues his honesty."

"I love the man," said Ben Jonson, the dramatist, "and do honor his memory, on this side of idolatry, as much as any. He was indeed honest, and of an open and free nature; had an excellent fantasy, brave notions, and gentle expressions, wherein he flowed with that facility that sometimes it was necessary he should be stopped. . . . There was ever more in him to be praysed than to be pardoned."

Shakespeare as a Lyric Poet. — Among Shakespeare's lyrics are the songs in the plays, but they are less important than his sonnets. Each of the one hundred and fifty-four sonnets contains three quatrains, followed by two lines that rime with each other. At an unknown date they were addressed to an unknown man, whom some believe to be William Herbert, Earl of Pembroke, while others are satisfied that the man was the Earl of Southampton. In Shakespeare's time sonnets were fashionable, and poets liked to praise a patron who was supposed to have inspired them. Many able men have tried to reveal the hidden meaning of the Shakespearean sonnets, if there be any, but it seems better to read and enjoy them simply as specimens of splendid poetry.

Shakespeare as a Dramatist. — If we wish to find pleasure in any drama we should read all of it as quickly as possible, even if passages here and there are rather puzzling. In this way we catch the spirit of the play and the general purpose of its author. This simple plan will add greatly to our satisfaction in studying the details at leisure. The word play implies pleasure no less real than that which comes to us in reading a good story or engaging in some pastime.

There was a time when Shakespeare could not write a single sentence, but he learned how to do this either at home or at school. When he went to London he noticed that there was a great demand for plays. He could not write a play. He was eager to know as much as possible about plays. He

found out that the most popular playwrights were college men. He did not waste time saying that a young man from the country had no chance against young men with a college education. He simply secured a position of some sort at a theatre. He watched the plays on the stage and took part in them. He picked up the technique of stagecraft. He asked himself why certain plays were popular. He read other people's plays. Some of them he touched up here and there from his knowledge of the stage and of human nature. Finally one day he began to write a play of his own. As the outcome of keen observation, good judgment, and lively imagination, he gave the people what they wanted. Of course, his first plays were not nearly so fine as those he wrote later, but he learned by experience, and there is no other way to learn anything. Determination spurred him on to hard work, and hard work developed the marvellous power that lay somewhere in his brain cells.

Order of the Plays. — No one can tell the precise order in which Shakespeare wrote his plays. If this fact were known, we could study them one after another as they were written, and thus to some extent we might trace the growth of Shakespeare's power. In a book whose large pages are of folio size, the plays were first published in 1623.

This is the method that has been followed by scholars in order to gain a general idea of the order of the plays. First, the date of performance or publication is compared with references, if there be any, in other works such as diaries. Second, if Shakespeare alludes in a certain play to an event that happened, for instance, in 1600, we are sure that the play could not have been written in 1599, unless the passage has been added later by some unknown hand. Third, in the earlier plays Shakespeare uses a great deal of rime, whereas in later plays he employs more blank verse with an extra syllable in the line. Fourth, the later plays are naturally

more finished in style, and show a deeper knowledge of human nature.

Plays of the First Period. — Since no one has positive knowledge of the date when Shakespeare wrote each of his



By Piloty

FIG. 47. — "Where is my Romeo."

plays, the division of the plays into groups is of value only so far as it tends to show the probable development of the poet's genius. His earliest play may have been written about 1589, and the plays of the first period seem to range between that date and 1594.

To Shakespeare's first or experimental period apparently belong the comedies *Love's Labour's Lost*, *Comedy of Errors*,

Two Gentlemen of Verona, and the historical plays *Henry VI*, *Richard III*, *King John*. The tragedy of blood, *Titus Andronicus*, also belongs to this series. *Love's Labour's Lost*, if not the earliest, is certainly a very early example of the poet's playwriting. Shakespeare is making interesting experiments that are to lead him higher.

Plays of the Second Period. — In the plays of the second period Shakespeare's sense of humor is surer and keener. Women now begin to play a more prominent part. The date of composition of the dramas of this group may range from about 1594 to about 1601. These comprise *Romeo and Juliet*, *Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Richard II*, *Merchant of Venice*, *Taming of the Shrew*, *Henry IV*, *Merry Wives of Windsor*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *Henry V*, *Julius Cæsar*, *As You Like It*, *Twelfth Night*.

Midsummer Night's Dream, first published in 1600, is the most daring romantic comedy of the second period. Shakespeare shows the fairies of the country to the people of the city. His magic makes the fairies of bygone centuries live again; his splendid judgment makes them live only among the mysteries of dreamland. Here is a familiar passage:

> The poet's eye, in a fine frenzy rolling,
> Doth glance from heaven to earth, from earth to heaven;
> And, as imagination bodies forth
> The forms of things unknown, the poet's pen
> Turns them to shapes, and gives to airy nothing
> A local habitation and a name.
> Such tricks hath strong imagination,
> That, if it would but apprehend some joy,
> It comprehends some bringer of that joy;
> Or in the night, imagining some fear,
> How easy is a bush suppos'd a bear! — Act V, Sc. i.

The Merchant of Venice, first printed in 1600, is more full of life than any romantic comedy we have hitherto considered.

This is why it remains so "popular." It is in this play that Shakespeare portrays his first masterful character. Shylock, convinced that some evil is about to happen, says to his daughter, Jessica, "Lock up my doors." Portia and Jessica



By R. Smirke

FIG. 48. — "Lock up my doors." — *Merchant of Venice.*

are far nobler figures than the adventurers who profess affection for these wealthy maidens. Shakespeare has now mastered the art of saying more than he seems to say. The witchery of twilight or moonlight, the witchery of true poetry, lurks in verses such as these:

Sit, Jessica: look, how the floor of heaven
Is thick inlaid with patines of bright gold:
There's not the smallest orb which thou behold'st
But in his motion like an angel sings,
Still quiring (choiring) to the young-eyed cherubims;
But, whilst this muddy vesture of decay
Doth grossly close it in, we cannot hear it. — Act V, Sc. i.

Patriotism is the keynote of *Henry V*, one of the best of Shakespeare's history plays. This type of play suited an age when Spain's power was jealously regarded in England. The dramatist points out that a ruler is responsible to the people as well as to a higher power.

All things are ready, if our minds be so. — Act IV, Sc. i.

Shakespeare was no snob. He did not despise the masses of the people, but he knew the fickleness of the mob. The Roman mob was like any other. *Julius Cæsar* is a profound study in sociology. Its unity rests upon the fact that it shows the inherent weakness of lynch law. Violence, even in a good cause, brings punishment of some sort either for one or for many. Cæsar and Brutus are neither wicked nor stupid, yet both perish because they have ventured to defy the sanction of lawful authority. Always the essence of tragedy is greatness with a fatal blemish.

O you hard hearts, you cruel men of Rome,
Knew you not Pompey? Many a time and oft
Have you climb'd up to walls and battlements,
To towers and windows, yea, to chimney-tops,
Your infants in your arms, and there have sat
The livelong day, with patient expectation,
To see great Pompey pass the streets of Rome.

And do you now strew flowers in his way
That comes in triumph over Pompey's blood?
Be gone! — Act I, Sc. i.

Midsummer Night's Dream, *As You Like It*, and *Twelfth Night* are dramatizations of pastoral romance. In such plays Shakespeare invites us to forget for a time the petty cares of the real world by rambling with him in an ideal world, where fancy triumphs over fact. The conception is not new to readers of books like Sidney's *Arcadia* and Spenser's *Faerie Queene*. *As You Like It* is a romantic comedy whose scenes are laid in the country. It is a sort of fairy tale told playfully in language of great beauty. Touchstone, the cleverest of Shakespearean clowns, enlivens the play with his irony. Every one has read the lines that follow:

> Sweet are the uses of adversity,
> Which like the toad, ugly and venomous,
> Wears yet a precious jewel in his head;
> And this our life, exempt from public haunt,
> Finds tongues in trees, books in the running brooks,
> Sermons in stones, and good in every thing.
>
> — Act II, Sc. i.

Plays of the Third Period. — Tragedy dominates the third period. The plays are *Troilus and Cressida*, *All's Well that Ends Well*, *Measure for Measure*, *Hamlet*, *Othello*, *King Lear*, *Macbeth*, *Timon of Athens*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, *Pericles*, *Coriolanus*. Shakespeare may have written these plays between 1601 and 1609. Some critics believe that his choice of tragedy had some connection with the circumstances of his own career, but it is much more likely that he wrote to suit a change in public taste.

On the map of Scotland, south of the Moray Firth, we can see the village of Auldearn. Three miles distant is the witches' hillock. Not a blade of grass grows upon it. Wan and lifeless lie the withered needles and cones of the pine trees. Do you notice that side of the hillock — bare and black? That is where the witches are said to have emptied their horrid caldron. Here it was that the three weird hags met

Macbeth after his victory over Macdonald, Lord of the Isles. From this spot Macbeth and Banquo passed onward to King Duncan (1033–1039) at the town of Forres.



By Fuseli

FIG. 49. — " When shall we three meet again ? "

The opening scene usually gives the clew to the purpose of any Shakespearean play. It matters little whether *Macbeth*



FIG. 50. — Glamis Castle, residence of Macbeth.

has or has not historical accuracy. The dramatist was simply writing a play upon a theme that might suit the taste of the new ruler James I, who was a Stuart from Edinburgh.

Macbeth (1039–1056) may have been nobler far than Shakespeare makes him, yet the literary value of this powerful drama is in no way lowered. As we read at home or witness on the stage the shortest and swiftest of all Shakespearean tragedies, we are in a realm where dates and other petty details are of no consequence. Witchcraft we may regard with scorn, but the witchery of the dramatist casts a spell over any mind that is in sympathy with him. The witches, uncanny representatives of the weaker side of human nature, sway Macbeth because his thoughts are in harmony with theirs. Down, down, down, into the abyss we observe two souls driven by a passion that whirls them off their feet.

> The instruments of darkness tell us truths,
> Win us with honest trifles, to betray's
> In deepest consequence. — Act I, Sc. iv.

Plays of the Fourth Period. — The plays of Shakespeare's maturity are *Cymbeline*, *Winter's Tale*, and *The Tempest*. Written probably between 1610 and 1612, they mark the most brilliant achievements in dramatic romance.

We have seen that the first period comprises the earliest dramatic productions, imperfect in style and in stagecraft. Shakespeare is not yet sure of himself. In the second period the poet's thought is not so conspicuous as his diction. If at times the speeches are too long for our taste, the action is always spirited. The third is the period of unrivalled splendor. No one knows how many plays were written at this time by other dramatists, but they were numerous and some were of unusual power. Most of the best Shakespearean tragedies were written in the reign of James I rather than that of Elizabeth. We shudder at the power of those dramas that depict the utter ruin of a great man through a besetting weakness. Othello, for example, falls simply by reason of his overtrustfulness. In the fourth period the three

dramatic romances are like sun-kissed rocks that smile gently after a succession of tragic storms. These three plays seem to rise above the turmoil of earth into an atmosphere peopled, as in *The Tempest*, by idealized figures like Prospero and his lovely daughter, Miranda.

Collaborated Plays. — Collaborated plays are those in which Shakespeare is believed to have worked with or after some other dramatist. *Titus Andronicus*, known to have been in existence in 1594, is what is called a tragedy of blood. It has been surmised that Kyd wrote much of it, a surmise for which there is no proof. Shakespeare may have taken another man's crude play and recast it, adding poetic passages that help to modify its horrors. The three parts of *Henry VI*, or Shakespeare's contributions thereto, may be the earliest of his dramatic work. No one can be sure that Marlowe wrote a single passage. If Shakespeare did not write the play, he may have given it a revision. *The Taming of the Shrew* is supposed to be an improved version of an earlier farce comedy. Its fun and vivacity scarcely make up for its lack of high literary power.

Among the later collaborated plays is *Timon of Athens*, first published in 1623. It is the story of a man who became a cynic when he experienced the sting of ingratitude. The text is corrupt. Most of the third and fifth acts are alleged to have been written by an unknown hand. Another disagreeable play is *Pericles*, based upon the old Greek romance, Apollonius of Tyre. In 1609 it was printed as Shakespeare's, nevertheless much of it is supposed to have been the work of an unrecognized playwright. *Henry VIII*, written about 1612, induced Tennyson to remark that many passages reminded him of Fletcher, a suggestion that was made earlier by others. Shakespeare probably worked along with John Fletcher in this play and to a less extent in *The Two Noble Kinsmen*.

Table of Approximate Dates. — The following table [1] sets forth in a convenient form some of the results of the latest Shakespearean scholarship. Each date indicates, as accurately as possible, the year when the play was written.

Periods	Comedies	Histories	Tragedies
I	L. L. L. 1591 C. of E. 1591 T. G. of V. 1591–2	1 Hy. VI 1590–1 2 Hy. VI 1590–2 3 Hy. VI 1590–2 R. III 1593 K. J. 1593	T. And. 1593–4
II	M. N. D. 1594–5 M. of V. 1595–6 T. of S. 1596–7 M. W. of W. 1598 M. Ado 1599 A. Y. L. I. 1599–1600 Tw. N. 1601	R. II 1595 1 Hy. IV 1597 2 Hy. IV 1598 Hy. V 1599	R. and J. 1594–5 J. Cæs. 1599
III	T. and C. 1601–2 A. Well 1602 Meas. 1603 Per. 1607–8		Ham. 1602–3 Oth. 1604 Lear 1605–6 Macb. 1606 T. of Ath. 1607 A. & Cl. 1607–8 Cor. 1609
IV	Cymb. 1610 W. Tale 1611 Temp. 1611 T. N. K. 1612–13	Hy. VIII 1612	

Lest We Forget. — All the original manuscripts have apparently perished. This makes it difficult, especially

[1] Reproduced from *Facts about Shakespeare* (1913). See bibliography at the end of this chapter.

in the earlier plays, to distinguish between what is Shakespeare's own work and what was written by an earlier hand or by a colleague. Naturally only the finest passages are ascribed to Shakespeare.

Besides, the actors at times may have taken liberties with the original copy, changing words or phrases, and inserting or removing passages. Carelessness or a desire to make a play fit for the stage may have caused such changes.



By Von Hatten

FIG. 51. — "Royal Dane, O, answer me."

Again, while Shakespeare is the most illustrious dramatist of literary history, he was human. If he chanced to be unwell, his work would suffer. Sometimes he may have been so busy that he had to write in a hurry.

The Best Plays. — *Hamlet* is the most popular of all Shakespearean tragedies, and *Macbeth* has second place. In sublimity of imagination *Lear* excels all the plays, but it is a drama difficult to present successfully on a modern stage.

Othello is probably the only play which can be acted in the modern manner on a modern stage with almost no alteration. As a study of human nature *Othello* is perhaps surpassed by *Hamlet* and *Macbeth,* and probably by *Lear.* As poetry it is



By Pilotty

Fig. 52. — "Falstaff — fast asleep."

certainly surpassed by *Lear* and *Hamlet,* and possibly by *Macbeth,* but in stagecraft it is without a rival. Next to these tragedies are *Romeo and Juliet* and *Julius Cæsar.*

It is the jovial figure of Falstaff that makes *Henry IV* the most attractive of the English history plays. Among the most popular of the historical dramas are *Richard II* and *Richard III.* The former is especially rich in memorable passages of poetry. The wooing of Lady Anne and the

dream of Clarence, in the latter play, have usually been favorite scenes with admirers of Shakespearean drama.

The Merchant of Venice ranks first in popularity among the romantic comedies. According to their taste will different people arrange the choicest of the remaining comedies. When we have read or seen *Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *As You Like It*, *Twelfth Night*, and *The Tempest*, we have read or seen about the best that Shakespeare offers in romance for the world's enjoyment.

Sources of the Plays. — Any one can tell a story, but a story has value according to the beauty or the literary art that it exhibits. Shakespeare cared little about historical accuracy, but no man ever surpassed him in reviving the spirit of a scene or the purport of a story. It was from the book of experience that he obtained most of the important material in his plays. He must have been a close observer, and his well-balanced imagination enabled him to portray what he observed. This he did in such a way that it will never be forgotten.

Allusions to ancient mythology and history were common in English dramas before Shakespeare. This seemed to suit the taste of the people. Although Shakespeare could probably glean the general meaning of a Roman writer like Plautus, yet he preferred English translations. Sir Thomas North's translations of Plutarch's *Lives* gave him a start with plays like *Julius Cæsar*.

Shakespeare read the plays, ballads, novels, and tales of other men. He had some knowledge of French, but he preferred translations, whether from French or from Italian or Spanish. If he saw anything that caught his fancy, he transformed it by the power of his brain, producing something new as well as true to human nature. The English history plays, *Macbeth*, and other dramas are based upon Daniel's *Barons' Wars*, Holinshed's *Chronicles*, and similar

works. From a brief remark in Holinshed he sketched the powerful figure of Lady Macbeth. Character after character is absolutely original.

Realism and Idealism. — In literature the word realism means presenting real life through language or through action and language. All literature, of course, professes to deal with real life directly or indirectly. There is the life of the flesh, and there is the life of the human spirit. Too often realism has been content to represent the former side of real life. No doubt man belongs to the animal kingdom, yet he is more than an animal. If he were not, there could be no such thing as literature. When stress is laid on the mere facts of life, we call it realism. When stress is laid on the truth or ideal underlying the facts, we call it idealism. This is not the whole story. It may, however, serve to indicate the difference. The English stage was becoming realistic when *The Tempest* appeared in all its serene beauty. This play is perhaps the last memorable expression of Shakespeare's belief that matter is controlled by mind, that the real is simply a cloak for the ideal.

Society and the Stage. — Why was the English stage changing its appeal? This is the answer. In 1588 the Spaniards, provoked by the deeds of English freebooters, had their *Armada* or armed fleet ready to attack England. The English became alarmed when there was a likelihood of invasion by the most powerful of all nations. People forgot their own petty troubles and quarrels in order to unite against the common foe. For a number of years every one was uplifted by that ideal which is called patriotism. It can scarcely be by chance that Shakespeare's English history plays, expressive of strong national feeling, were apparently written between 1590 and 1599.

Time, however, brought a sense of national security. The closing years of the sixteenth century witnessed the rise of

certain social tendencies that reached their climax in the Restoration drama of the latter half of the seventeenth century. People became more interested in themselves and their neighbors. The stage, which strives to be the mirror of its own age, portrayed or laughed at passing follies and pleasantries. In other words, the stage was becoming realistic, and it turned to the comedy of manners.

The Playwright's Problem. — A poem or a novel may be successful many years after it is published, but a play must succeed at once. If it fails to please the playgoers during the first week of its performance, the manager withdraws it from the boards. No one knew this better than Shakespeare. He was not indifferent to real life. His plays were written to be acted.

How did he solve the problem? He used his imagination. He put himself in the position of a person seeking entertainment at the Globe or any other theatre. Like other playwrights, most of whom are now forgotten, Shakespeare dealt with the incidents of human life. He selected those that suited his purpose, and he had a purpose. He possessed the imagination and the self-control of a supreme artist. He saw what every one desired to see. He glorified the facts of life by showing their full significance. He penetrated to the inner meaning of events and pictured what other playwrights had failed to behold.

Why Shakespeare Lives. — The most gifted actors, not only of Britain and America, but of Italy and other countries, still present these matchless dramas to appreciative audiences. The plays have life, and through them Shakespeare lives. This is why. Playwrights without genius follow the passing appetite of the multitude, whereas Shakespeare guides the multitude by coaxing them to see the beauty that is hidden in common incidents and in human hearts. He strips the pettiness from life and reveals the eternal elements underneath.

Again and again he shows us how to overcome the restraints of real life by finding freedom in the realm of the ideal. It is the atmosphere of romance, portrayed with unparalleled judgment, that enables him to see life in its true perspective. He has learned to live with genial dignity, unmoved by what is transient. This is the greatest secret of his life-work. This it is that enables his plays to stand the test of time. This it is that makes them appeal to man as man anywhere at any time. And this quality is called universality.

His Place in Literature. — Perfect men and perfect women need no drama. It is with the strife of good and evil that religion and the drama are mainly concerned. Shakespeare never teaches, except indirectly. He suggests what is the end of all education — the art of living. Somewhere in his plays every man is sure to find himself, and the discovery makes an indelible impression. It would need another Shakespeare to interpret completely the creative genius of the world's most illustrious dramatist.

Farewell, William Shakespeare! Help us not to misunderstand the simple courage, the hidden beauty, the divine hope in the words of the English monarch:

> There is some soul of goodness in things evil,
> Would men observingly distil it out.
>
> — *Henry V*, Act IV, Sc. i.

SUMMARY

1. Love of adventure and religious troubles put color into the Shakespearean period. No book of great importance appeared during the first twenty years of Elizabeth's reign.

2. Ascham's prose was plain, whereas Lyly's was flowery.

3. Sidney's *Arcadia* is a pastoral romance wherein gentlemen of fashion are supposed to be shepherds. The pastoral style was a fad borrowed from Spain. Sidney's *Apologie for*

Poetrie seeks to show that poetry has real value for those who do not forget that each human being possesses a mind or soul as well as a body.

4. Spenser's *Shepherd's Calendar* represents England as a sort of sheep farm in charge of "Fair Eliza." His *Epithalamion* is a poem celebrating the sacredness of true love. His *Faerie Queene* is a long pastoral poem written in honor of Elizabeth. Its moral and political allegory may now be a little tiresome, although as beautiful poetry it will always be appreciated.

5. Spain in the sixteenth century was the greatest of all nations. Its literature affected English men of letters.

6. In 1576, when Shakespeare was a boy of twelve, the first English theatre was erected by James Burbage. Theatrical companies seldom printed the plays which they purchased. They did not wish them to be used by other companies.

7. Lyly's *Woman in the Moon*, Peele's *David and Bethsabe*, Kyd's *Spanish Tragedy*, and Greene's *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay* are among the many plays that prepared the way for Marlowe and Shakespeare.

8. Marlowe wrote four tragedies, the earliest of which is *Tamburlaine* (Tamerlane, a Tartar chief of the fourteenth century who conquered most of western Asia). These plays are spirited and poetical. Marlowe was not the first dramatist to employ blank verse, but he showed Shakespeare what could be done with it.

9. Shakespearean lyrics include songs of the plays, sonnets, and several larger poems. Beautiful lyrics were common in those days, but in imagination, in poetic force, Shakespeare is the acknowledged leader.

10. If we try to arrange the plays in much the same order as they were written, we may observe the growth of the dramatist's mental power. Most of the greatest tragedies belong to the reign of James I.

11. Realism consists in presenting certain aspects of real life. Idealism tries to show the lasting or ideal significance of the passing events of real life. Shakespeare is an idealist.

12. During the closing years of Elizabeth's reign insincerity and shallowness of thought infected many members of fashionable society. This brought a change in the style of most playwrights, but not in that of Shakespeare.

Test Questions

1. What is euphuism?
2. In what respect do More's *Utopia*, Sidney's *Arcadia*, and Bacon's *New Atlantis* resemble each other?
3. What are Spenser's chief pastoral poems? What is the nature of the allegory? Explain Spenserian stanza.
4. Name at least two of Bacon's works, and state their purpose.
5. By whom was the first public playhouse built in England? Wherein did it differ from a present-day theatre?
6. Why were plays of the Shakespearean period rarely printed immediately after they were written?
7. How did Lyly, Kyd, Peele, and Greene promote the development of English drama?
8. In what class of drama did Marlowe distinguish himself? Why is Marlowe specially remembered by students of drama?
9. Do you know anything about Shakespeare as a man, as a lyric poet, and as a dramatist?
10. Name at least one play in each of the four periods of Shakespeare's career. What is the use of trying to arrange his plays in the order in which they were written? Do you remember any books that he must have read in securing material for his plays?
11. Is there any connection between the Spanish *Armada* and Shakespeare's English history plays?
12. What is meant by saying that Shakespeare was an idealist?

ADDITIONAL AUTHORS WITH CHIEF WORKS

George Gascoigne (1525?–1577), *The Steel Glass;* Sir Thomas North (1535?–1601), *Plutarch's Lives* (from a French version); Sir Walter Raleigh (1552–1618), *History of the World;* Richard Hooker (1553?–1600), *The Ecclesiastical Polity;* Thomas Lodge

(1558?–1625), *Rosalynde*. Lodge is the playwright who set out on a freebooting cruise, during which he composed in 1596 *A Margarite of America*, probably the only novel ever written in the chilly Magellan Straits (South America); George Chapman (1559?–1634), *Bussy d'Ambois* and *Homer*, a spirited version rather than a translation; Thomas Campion (1560?–1620), *Book of Ayres*; Sir John Davies (1560–1626), *The Orchestra;* Samuel Daniel (1562–1619), *Delia;* Michael Drayton (1563–1631), *Polyolbion*, a long poem celebrating the rivers of England and the events connected with them. One of his odes is *The Virginian Voyage*, depicting Virginia as an ideal land and forecasting her future triumphs in poetry; Thomas Nash (1567–1601?), *The Unfortunate Traveller;* Thomas Middleton (1570?–1627), *A Trick to Catch the Old One;* Thomas Dekker (1570?–1641), *Fortunatus*, in which occur the memorable lines —

> Patience! why, 'tis the soul of peace,
> Of all the virtues nearest kin to heaven;
> It makes men look like gods. The best of men
> That e'er wore earth about him was a suff'rer.

SUPPLEMENTARY READING

Besides general works mentioned in previous chapters, the following books are recommended:

a. For Classes

Among the best editions of separate Shakespearean plays are those known as the Tudor (Macmillan), $.25; based upon the Neilson text, which has no superior; the Arden (Heath), $.25; Temple (Dutton), $.35; Rolfe (American Book Co.), $.56; and the Hudson (Ginn), $.50. Everyman's Library and the Canterbury Poets, N. Y. (Simmons), $.40, contain editions of the standard works.

E. A. Baker, *Sidney's Arcadia*, N. Y. (Dutton), $2.00.

A. H. Bullen, *Lyrics from Elizabethan Dramatists*, N. Y. (Scribner's), $1.50.

L. C. Elson, *Shakespeare in Music*, Bost. (Page), $2.00.

C. and M. Lamb, *Tales from Shakespeare*, N. Y. (Dutton), $.35; also in Pocket Classics (Macmillan), $.25. This book should be in every school library.

H. A. Guerber, *Stories of Shakespeare's Tragedies*, N. Y. (Dodd), $1.25.

C. and M. Maud, *Shakespeare's Stories*, N. Y. (Longmans), $1.50.

R. Noel, *Selected Poems of Edmund Spenser*, N. Y. (Simmons), $.40.

C. S. Northrup, *Essays of Francis Bacon*, Bost. (Houghton), $.40.

b. For Teachers and Others

The best one-volume editions of Shakespeare are the Globe by W. G. Clark and W. A. Wright (Macmillan), $1.75, the Oxford by W. J. Craig (Oxford Press), $2.50, and the Cambridge Poets edition by W. A. Neilson, Bost. (Houghton), $3.00. The most comprehensive edition is the Variorum series by H. H. Furness, published at Philadelphia (Lippincott), $4.00 per volume.

G. P. Baker, *The Development of Shakespeare as a Dramatist*, N. Y. (Macmillan), $1.75.

H. C. Beeching, *The Sonnets of Shakespeare*, Boston (Ginn), $.60.

J. C. Collins, *Plays and Poems of Robert Greene*, 2 vols., N. Y. (Oxford Press), $5.75. Other dramatists are in the same series.

S. Lee, *Elizabethan Sonnets*, 2 vols., N. Y. (Dutton), $ 2.50.

S. L. Lee, *Shakespeare and the Modern Stage*, N. Y. (Scribner), $ 2.00.

Hamilton W. Mabie, *William Shakespeare, Poet, Dramatist, and Man*, N. Y. (Macmillan), $1.00.

H. N. MacCracken, *Introduction to Shakespeare*, N. Y. (Macmillan), $.90.

Brander Matthews, *A Study of Versification*, Bost. (Houghton), $1.25.

Brander Matthews, *Shakespeare as a Playwright*, N. Y. (Scribner), $3.00.

R. Morris, *Works of Spenser*, N. Y. (Macmillan), Globe ed., $1.75.

W. A. Neilson, *The Chief Elizabethan Dramatists*, Bost. (Houghton), $2.75.

W. A. Neilson and A. E. Thorndike, *The Facts about Shakespeare*, N. Y. (Macmillan), $.60. An indispensable manual with reliable bibliography.

W. R. Raleigh, *Shakespeare* (Macmillan), English Men of Letters series, $.40 to $.75. Sidney, Spenser, Bacon, etc., are in the same series of biographies.

T. Seccombe and J. W. Allen, *Age of Shakespeare*, 2 vols., N. Y. (Macmillan), $1.00 ea.

J. D. Wilson, *Life in Shakespeare's England*, N. Y. (Putnam's), $1.10.

CHAPTER IX

THE MILTONIC PERIOD

1616–1660

An earnest Puritan was John Stubbs. He wrote an account of his "Discoverie of a Gaping Gulf whereinto England is like to be swallowed by another French marriage, if the Lord forbid not the banns by letting her Majestie see the sin and punishment thereof." His writing was regarded as an act of treason, and at Westminster a butcher's knife severed his right hand. As with his remaining hand he took off his cap, Stubbs, in an outburst of astounding loyalty, shouted "Long live Queen Elizabeth."

Better, however, to lose a hand than to lose a head as did William Laud, Archbishop of Canterbury. Both men were zealous, both were men of resolution, both met misfortune with conspicuous courage and dignity. Evidently violent deeds cast shadows over England during the sixteenth and the seventeenth century. Let us without bias or passion glance at the troubles of the Miltonic period in order to understand the spirit of its literature.

Features of the Miltonic Period. — As it often happens in such a case, the Miltonic period is so called because Milton is its literary leader. In the previous chapter we observed that the Shakespearean period was marked by love of adventure in foreign lands; but the Miltonic period is marked by adventure in the homeland, by attention to the realities of everyday life, a feature reflected so clearly upon the stage of the theatres. The Shakespearean period was colored by

love of the unknown in the great outside world; the Miltonic period is colored by desire to explore the unknown within each human heart.

Love of romance, so characteristic of the age of Shakespeare, gives way to renewed interest in the details of everyday society. Human society, however, is always imperfect, and in certain moods we tend to become dissatisfied. Dissatisfaction with material realities leads many thoughtful men to seek consolation in spiritual realities, and this is another of the chief features of life and literature during the Miltonic or Puritan period.



From the Meyrick Collection

FIG. 53. — A Cavalier.

Social Divisions of Mankind. — Under different names the Cavalier and Puritan have existed in all ages of human history. The former beholds what seems to be best in the past; the latter beholds what seems to be best in the future. The one is inclined to retain the truth already discovered; the other sees that man's comprehension of truth is incomplete. The one side believes that life is a compromise; the other believes that the ideal can be made real. Thus it is that men of distinct natures or temperaments range themselves on opposite sides in politics, religion, literature, and all other forms of social endeavor.

The Puritans. — About the middle of the sixteenth century the term Puritan appears to have been first applied to certain members of the Church of England. Those gentlemen objected to parts of the church ritual. They desired a form of public worship more simple, one which they believed to be

more pure. The most radical of the Puritans came to be known as Independents, and they were opposed to a national church of any kind.

During Elizabeth's reign a sense of chivalry helped to prevent any serious outbreak, but during the reign of James I and that of Charles I the Puritans became more numerous and more active. To America in 1620 sailed the celebrated Pilgrim Fathers, who exiled themselves, ready to endure the hardships of pioneer life in order to enjoy freedom of worship according to the dictates of conscience. A majority of the Puritans, however, remained in England and became involved in the Civil War of 1642.



From Jeffrey's Dresses

FIG. 54. — A Puritan.

The Cavaliers. — The term Cavalier, as we all know, is French, and means a horseman or an armed rider. The typical Cavalier owned a charger or war-horse. Many of the Cavaliers were satisfied with the forms of the Established Church; others were Catholics. Both sections were united in loyalty to the throne, believing that reform is preferable to revolution. Some of those gentlemen — English, Irish, Welsh, Scots — found their way to America, when Cromwell became master of England. Others, as soldiers of fortune, offered their services to foreign rulers, and found graves far away from their homeland.

Authorized Version of the Bible. — Overlooking the river Thames stands Hampton Court Palace. Early in the reign of James I a conference was held within one of the oak-panelled chambers in order, if possible, to bring peace and

harmony to the broken ranks of religion. Much was said about imperfections in the existing translations of the Scriptures. The king himself, who was often present at the meetings, approved of any plan that would unite the scholars of the age in an effort to produce a satisfactory translation. Fifty-four learned men were chosen, most of whom undertook the task. For three years they consulted with each other at Oxford, Cambridge, and Westminster. Finally in 1611 the outcome of their labors was published. It is commonly called the Authorized Version, because it was printed under the authority of its translators, ratified by the Privy Council and the king.



FIG. 55. — Hampton Court Palace.

Its Literary Position. — The general accuracy of this translation and, above all, the stately charm of the language soon gave it the preference over all other versions in England. In the whole range of our literature its prose is unequalled for simplicity, dignity, and happy turns of expression. The leading scholars of Cromwell's day declared that it was "the best of any in the world." Many of us have become attached to its quaint English through childhood memories. Thus lasting good sprang out of the disputes between Cavaliers and Puritans, both of whom contributed the best of their culture in order to bring honor and dignity to the religious instincts of the nation.

1. *DRAMATIC WRITINGS*

The Three Unities. — French critics of the seventeenth century called attention to three distinct kinds of unity in playwriting — unity of time, place, and action.

Believing that they were following a hint in Aristotle's *Poetics*, they laid down the rule that the events of a play ought to take place within a period of about twenty-four hours. Thus unity of time implied that a character could not be a child in one act, and later appear on the stage as an adult.

Unity of place required that all the events of a play should take place in one country. A man could not appear in London during one act, and during another act appear in Paris or in New York.

Unity of action means that all the incidents of the story must cluster about a single purpose. Everything that happens must lead on to the catastrophe or closing act of the play.

Shakespeare and almost all other English playwrights paid no attention to unity of time and place, because they could see no good reason for such arbitrary rules. Unity of action, however, is essential in any play anywhere.

Choir-boys as Actors.[1] — On the English stage boy-actors for a time were more popular even than men-players in the company of which Shakespeare was a member. The second scene of the second act of *Hamlet* shows that Shakespeare's sympathies were naturally with the men, and yet some of the foremost dramatists wrote plays specially for the choir-boy actors.

On the stage appeared members of the juvenile choirs of the Chapel Royal, St. Paul's Cathedral, and the Royal Chapel at Windsor. Of the three choirs the oldest is that of the Chapel Royal, first mentioned in 1420. Even before the

[1] J. A. Nairn, "Boy-Actors under the Tudors and Stewarts," *Trans. Royal Soc. of Lit.*, Lond., 1913.

reign of Elizabeth they were at times employed as actors. Lyly wrote plays for this boy-company, and Peele's *Arraignment of Paris* was also performed by them. During the last six years of Elizabeth's reign a company of them did all the acting at the Blackfriars. They were so popular that their manager could exact a price of admission higher than that of other London theatres.

Beaumont and Fletcher, Ben Jonson, and others wrote for the boy-actors several plays, in which singing was prominent. In Elizabeth's time they were commonly called Children of the Chapel, whereas James I and Charles I knew them as Children of the Queen's Revels. In 1626 they ceased to act on account of the objections raised by the Puritans.

Schoolboys as Actors. — The second of the chief classes of boy-actors belonged to Eton, Westminster, or Merchant Taylor's school. It was at the last-named school that the dramatists Kyd, Lodge, and Shirley were educated. Udall, author of *Ralph Roister Doister*, had been headmaster at Eton. In 1555 he became headmaster of Westminster. In those days every school of importance presented plays, and the Westminster schoolboys still perform each Christmas.

How Boys Affected Drama. — Lyly and Peele prepared comedies to suit the juvenile actors. Their plays call for quick wit and fancy rather than the intense emotion depicted by men like Marlowe and Shakespeare. Of course, even in the plays of Marlowe and Shakespeare boys took the women's parts, but the bulk of the acting was performed by men. No women were employed as actresses in England until the Restoration period. In Beaumont and Fletcher's *Philaster* Euphrasia is disguised as a page, and in the many plays where women appear in disguise, a boy could perhaps be trained to play the part more conveniently than a woman. During the Shakespearean and Miltonic periods all the women's

songs were adapted to music that would bring out the best qualities of the voices of the boy-actors.

Alliance of Religion and Drama. — Strolling players, often regarded as little better than vagabonds, were everywhere in Europe during the centuries that succeeded the fall of the western Roman Empire. They gave open-air exhibitions of a varied character. Jugglers, contortionists, minstrels, pantomime players, and others were known to every village. Besides, the people had their own sports and festivals, some of which, like the Christmas disguisings, were dramatic in character. This love of the spectacular the church in all lands observed and tried to guide into innocent channels. Thus arose the miracle and moral plays of Europe.

Enmity of Religion and Drama. — Gradually the earlier drama gave up the patronage of the church for that of the aristocracy. Kings and queens encouraged and moulded the stage until in England it attained its highest splendor under Shakespeare. For a time the stage largely directed the tastes and ideals of the nation. This is why the Puritan forces ultimately combined to abolish the theatre. Puritan influence had been strong enough in London to prevent the erection of the first public theatre within the city limits. In 1642 all public theatres were ordered to close their doors. The Parliamentary or Puritan party was conscientiously opposed to the stage because its exhibitions were not always as pure as they ought to have been.

Attitude of the Playwrights. — During the reign of James I the playwrights finally felt obliged to defend themselves. Shakespeare's later plays contain allusions to the systematic attack upon the theatre. Jonson and others are more open and direct. The plays of the first twenty years of the Miltonic period have at times no less imagination, no less stagecraft, than they had during the Shakespearean period. They are, however, strongly colored by knowledge of an influence

that was snapping the cords of sympathy between them and the nation as a whole. English drama possessed abundance of poetry as well as a vigorous mentality until the Civil War brought it to a temporary halt. After about twenty years of slumber it awoke to aid the drama of the Restoration.

Ben Jonson (1573?–1637)

His Choicest Poem. — Perhaps the finest poem ever written by Ben Jonson is to be found in one of his collections called *Underwoods*. The simple beauty of this song needs no praise.

See the chariot at hand here of Love,
Wherein my lady rideth!
Each that draws is a swan or a dove,
And well the car Love guideth.
As she goes, all hearts do duty
Unto her beauty
And, enamoured, do wish, so they might
But enjoy such a sight,
That they still were to run by her side
Through swords, through seas, whither she would ride.

Do but look on her eyes, they do light
All that Love's world compriseth!
Do but look on her hair, it is bright
As Love's star when it riseth!
Do but mark, her forehead's smoother
Than words that soothe her!
And from her arched brows, such a grace
Sheds itself through the face,
As alone there triumphs to the life
All the gain, all the good, of the elements' strife.

His Career. — About 1573, a month after the death of his father, who had been a clergyman, Ben Jonson was born in London. Two years later his mother married a master

bricklayer. The child was educated at a private school and then at the Westminster School. One day the sturdy lad for some reason left his father's employment and served as a soldier in Flanders. When he returned to London, he became an actor before he began to write plays. All this occurred by the time he was twenty years of age. When another actor insulted him, Jonson challenged him to a duel, and killed the man in fair fight. For a time he lay in jail.



From portrait by Honthorst, National Portrait Gallery

Ben: Jonsonus.

Fig. 56. — Ben Jonson.

Jonson sprang into fame through his comedy *Every Man in His Humour*, which in 1598 was acted by Shakespeare and his associates. It is a good-natured play of everyday life. The characters are types, each with his humor or ruling passion. That is to say, by "Humour" the dramatist means habitual mood or most noticeable peculiarity. This play proved so popular that in 1599 *Every Man Out of His Humour* was acted before the queen by Shakespeare's company. The latter was not a success, and Ben Jonson blamed the players for cutting out parts of it to suit their own pleasure.

Several times in his career the dramatist lost his temper, although he was really a kind-hearted man. At the Mermaid Club, founded by Raleigh, Jonson was the leading wit among a membership that included Shakespeare and other brethren of the dramatic craft. No man had more friends, because every one believed that he was manly and conscientious.

Ben Jonson became prosperous when James I came to the throne. In 1613 the playwright was in Paris, and five years later he was on a visit to the poet Drummond of Hawthornden near Edinburgh. His ancestors, who must have been Johnstones, belonged to Scotland. For a number of years prior to his death in 1637, the dramatist had been receiving a pension from James I and from his son Charles I. Over the grave in Westminster Abbey is a stone on which is carved — "O rare Ben Jonson."

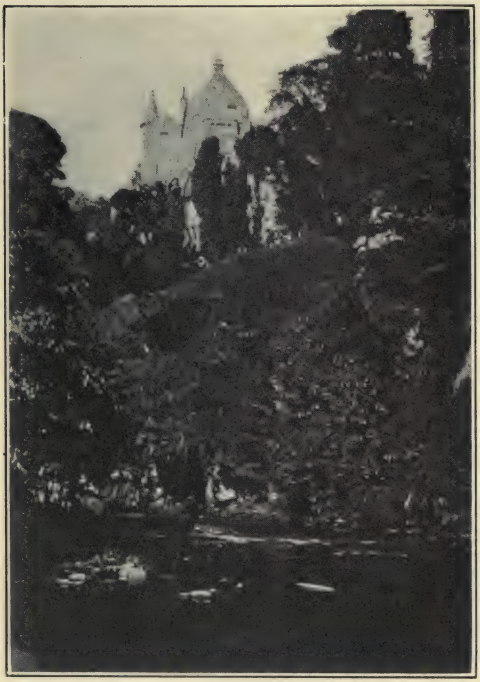


Fig. 57. — Hawthornden, Home of Drummond.

The Comedies. — Jonson's works, about fifty in all, include comedies, masques, tragedies, and prose. The comedy of Elizabethan or Shakespearean days is distinct from that of James I and his son, and it was Ben Jonson who introduced the change. He created realistic comedy, setting forth with great detail the social conditions of London and of England in general. His plots are carefully constructed in order to bring out the "Humours" or class peculiarities of society.

The Case is Altered (1599), like *The Poetaster* (1601), was acted by the Children of the Chapel Royal. The latter is an attack upon men-actors.

The best of the comedies include *Volpone, or the Fox* (1605) and *The Alchemist* (1610), the latter of which has among its characters two Puritans named Ananias and Tribulation Wholesome. The manly nature of Jonson detested shams, and with a great variety of fun and satire he set forth his most original plot in *Bartholomew Fair* (1614). Possibly this play gave Bunyan a hint for the Vanity Fair of his *Pilgrim's Progress*. *A Tale of a Tub* (1633) deals with country manners and, casually, with the usages of St. Valentine's Day.

Jonson's unfinished historical drama, *The Sad Shepherd*, is of uncertain date. It leads us into the country to mingle with Robin Hood and his merry men. One of its poetic passages runs thus:

> Here she was wont to go! and here! and here!
> Just where these daisies, pinks and violets grow;
> The world may find the Spring by following her,
> For other print her airy steps ne'er left.
> Her treading would not bend a blade of grass,
> Or shake the downy bluebell from his stalk!
>
> — Act I, Sc. i.

The Masques. — Masques and other entertainments were in demand by the Court, and Jonson proved to be the most gifted writer of literary masques as well as of realistic comedies. In earlier days the masque was a form of disguising with aristocratic amateurs as the players. Dance, music, and gorgeous scenery were among its chief elements. When dialogue was introduced, the masque became literary. Jonson possessed the inventiveness, the readiness to adapt himself to circumstances, the poetic genius necessary to the highest success. Drawing from his vast stores of learning, he skillfully shaped the material to suit the tastes of royalty

and the nobility. Most of his later efforts are comic masques or anti-masques.

Some of the best masques are *Queens* (1609), praised by the poet Swinburne as " the most splendid of all masques " ; *The Irish Masque* (1613–1614), chiefly in Irish dialect; *Pleasure Reconciled to Virtue* (1618), with Comus as one of the characters; *Discovered in the Moon* (1620–1621); *Love's Triumph* (1631), in which Charles I acted; *Chloridia* (1631–1632), presented by the queen and her ladies.

The Tragedies. — The classical tragedies of Ben Jonson are much more accurate, though less inspired, than those of Shakespeare.

> The world knows only two, that's Rome and I.
> My roof receives me not; 'tis air I tread;
> And, at each step, I feel my advanced head
> Knock out a star in heaven! Rear'd to this height,
> All my desires seem modest, poor, and slight,
> That did before sound impudent. — *Sejanus*, Act V, Sc. i.

These are the words of a man who is so carried away by insolence that his fall is certain. He is Sejanus, the favorite of the crafty Emperor Tiberius, whose complex character is vividly portrayed in Jonson's earlier tragedy. The terror of those bygone days is challenged by Sejanus in this speech:

> How vain and vile a passion is this fear;
> What base uncomely things it makes men do!
> Suspect their noblest friends, as I did this,
> Flatter poor enemies, entreat their servants,
> Stoop, court, and catch at the benevolence
> Of creatures unto whom, within this hour,
> I would not have vouchsaf'd a quarter-look.
> — Act V, Sc. viii.

The playwright's most important prose work bears the strange title *Timber*, but it is no wooden or dull production,

for it contains much sound criticism of Bacon and other men of letters.

Jonson's Literary Position. — Courage, perfect independence, and an eye for life's humbugs are among the qualities of Jonson as a man. No one who has read his works can fail to be impressed with the vast extent of his reading. He is one of the three most thorough scholars among English poets, the two others being Milton and Gray. Indeed, if Jonson had ignored some of the restrictions of ancient classical drama, he might have attained even greater distinction. As it is, he is surpassed by Shakespeare alone in English dramatic literature. He had a high conception of the dramatic craft, and he never spared pains to realize his ideals even at the cost of popularity.

Beaumont (1584–1616) and Fletcher (1579–1625). — When the unfortunate Mary, Queen of Scots, was beheaded by order of her cousin Elizabeth, the chaplain at her execution was the father of John Fletcher, the dramatist. Five years older than his friend Beaumont, Fletcher lived until the end of the reign of James I. Francis Beaumont studied at Cambridge, Fletcher at Oxford. They are usually mentioned together, because they were partners in so many productions.



From an engraving by H. Robinson

FIG. 58. — Francis Beaumont.

Among the many plays of Beaumont and Fletcher is *Philaster*, a tragi-comedy named after its hot-headed jealous hero. Arethusa is a noble type of womanhood who, like many another good woman, endures with patience more than one phase of masculine stupidity. The character that arouses our keenest sympathy is Bellario, the maiden Euphrasia disguised as a page. In none of the plays is there a

more pathetic creation. In Fletcher's *The Faithful Shepherdess* are some beautiful scenes presented with brilliant imaginative power. This pastoral drama enjoys the distinction of having suggested Milton's *Comus*. Most of the plays contain songs that are well worthy of any dramatist.

Beaumont and Fletcher profited greatly through knowledge of the work of other playwrights. Fluent and lucid in style, they achieved a popularity that lasted for years subsequent to their death. As a rule, their works may be said to appeal to sentiment rather than to delineate the inner workings of human character. In spite of the poetic beauty of their diction, they seemed to lack that seriousness of purpose, without which most writers are unable to stand the test of time. Genius they undoubtedly possessed, yet they failed at times to employ it to the best advantage.



From an engraving by H. Robinson

FIG. 59. — John Fletcher.

John Ford (1586–1645?) came from Ilsington in Devonshire. His earliest surviving play, *The Lover's Melancholy*, contains some beautiful passages. It was acted in 1628. *The Broken Heart*, first printed in 1633, is a tragedy whose characters are doomed by fate. Ithocles and others are men of a truly noble disposition. *Perkin Warbeck* was superior to any historical play that had been written since Shakespeare's history plays appeared. Warbeck is depicted as a man of dignity and resolution. Ford exhibits no little sympathy with human misfortune, and at times his blank verse attains both strength and beauty. He died before the Civil War came to an end.

James Shirley (1596–1666) was a man who had been educated at both Oxford and Cambridge. Beginning with *Love's Tricks* (1624) he wrote many comedies on the manners

of his time. *The Lady of Pleasure* (1633), which is regarded as his masterpiece, portrays the amusing Lady Bornwell.

In 1637 he accompanied the Earl of Strafford to Dublin, where for three years he wrote plays. *The Bird in a Cage* contains some satire against Puritanism. It was in Dublin that he wrote *St. Patrick for Ireland*, a sort of sacred comedy containing many passages of distinct charm. *The Cardinal* is the best of his tragedies. Shirley continued to write till about 1640 or later, and when the Civil War broke out, he served on the Loyalist or Cavalier side under his patron, the Earl of Newcastle. When the war was over, he became a schoolmaster. In 1659 he published *The Contention of Ajax and Ulysses*, one of the best-known masques. The great fire of London in 1666 gave him and his wife such a shock that they both died the same day.

The author of about forty plays, Shirley was no weakling. The plots were so carefully constructed that his plays were popular for years. He was endowed with the gift of humor as well as imagination, and his dramatic works possessed sufficient vigor to inspire some of the plays of the Restoration period.

2. *PROSE*

A dignified seriousness is the keynote of the prose of this period. Prose, like poetry, felt the strain of an age that was embittered by wrangling about church affairs.

Robert Burton (1577–1641) was a gentleman who lived when a stately melancholy was fashionable in many places. His *Anatomy of Melancholy*, first published in 1621, analyzes the kinds, causes, and other details of his theme. The numerous anecdotes, curious learning, and sly humor make this book one of the most remarkable in our literature. Readers ought to be warned that the book is of considerable

size, yet to a person who is not impatient the *Anatomy* will prove more attractive than its title implies.

Izaak Walton (1593–1683) went from Stafford to London, where he engaged in business as an ironmonger or dealer in hardware. The poet Donne was vicar of a church in Walton's neighborhood, and the two men became close friends. A Loyalist or Cavalier, Walton was a man who had no taste for quarrels. His sunny disposition, his piety, and his love of angling enabled him to endure with patience the troubled years that led to Cromwell's supremacy. His *Compleat Angler,* first published in 1653, is still as enjoyable as when it first appeared. Walton, with his quiet style and genial thoughts, is as much loved as he was when, at the age of ninety, he was laid to rest at Winchester Cathedral.

Sir Thomas Browne (1605–1682). — Three centuries have failed to dim the splendor of such words as these :

> I cannot fall out, or contemn a man for an error, or conceive why a difference in opinion should divide all affection: for controversies, disputes, and argumentations, both in philosophy and in divinity, if they meet with discreet and peaceable natures, do not infringe the laws of charity. In all disputes, so much as there is of passion, so much there is of nothing to the purpose; for then reason, like a bad hound, spends upon a false scent, and forsakes the question first started. And this is one reason why controversies are never determined.

The man who wrote these words was Thomas Browne. About the year 1635 he wrote his earliest book, *Religio Medici* (Religion of a Physician), which attracted much attention when it was first published. He writes like a gentleman, considerate of other people's feelings. His pleasing style, polished humor, and sympathy single him out as a man who will always have admirers.

The book entitled *Vulgar Errors* (1646) is highly artistic and in every way as entertaining as Burton's masterpiece.

Even less familiar books such as *Urn Burial* (1658) are full of human interest. The latter contains the following allusion to America:

> The treasures of time lie high, in urns, coins, and monuments. Time hath endless rarities, and shows of all varieties; which reveals old things in heaven, makes new discoveries in earth, and even earth itself a discovery. That grand antiquity, America, lay buried for a thousand years; and a large part of the earth is still in the urn unto us.

Thomas Fuller (1608–1661), tall, handsome, and kindly by nature, is best remembered for his witty sayings. His *Worthies of England,* begun while he was a chaplain for the Cavalier army, contains an account of eminent Englishmen as well as odds and ends about many other topics. His *Church History* and similar works are not so well known as the *Worthies.* Two or three specimens of his wit and wisdom are here given:

> When any one contradicts me, he raises my attention, not my anger.
>
> Scoff not at the natural defects of any, which are not in their power to amend. Oh! 'tis cruelty to beat a cripple with his own crutches.
>
> Moderation is the silken string running through the pearl-chain of all virtues.

Jeremy Taylor (1613–1667) received his higher education at Cambridge. His pulpit oratory in London ceased when he accompanied the Royalist troops as a chaplain. He was imprisoned by the Parliamentary leaders, and after his release he retired to Wales. There he wrote the *Liberty of Prophesying* (Preaching) in 1647, and his famous devotional works *Holy Living* (1650) and *Holy Dying* (1651). Several times Taylor was fined and imprisoned. In 1658 he was at Lisburn and at Portmore in northeastern Ireland.

It was two years later that Taylor became Bishop of Down and Connor in Ireland, a position which he held till his death at Lisburn in 1667. Although his sentences seem to us rather long, yet his style is clear and lit up with splendid poetic imagery.

John Bunyan (1628–1688)

There is magic in a book that has given pleasure to generations of children for nearly two hundred and fifty years. Never was a better adventure story written than *The Pilgrim's Progress*, and we can scarcely conceive of a time when young people will cease to follow with breathless interest the Progress of the Pilgrim. Translated into many languages, this prose allegory has attracted all adults who are able to recognize literary genius.



From painting by Sadler, National Portrait Gallery

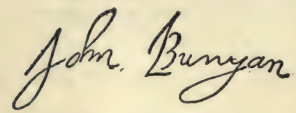


Fig. 60. — John Bunyan.

Like Shakespeare and Burns, John Bunyan did not enjoy the advantages of a college education, although he was taught to read and write at the Elstow school near Bedford. Young Bunyan learned the same trade as his father, who was a tinker. When he was not working with his father, he shared in the village sports and games. In later years he bitterly reproached himself for his tendency to swearing, dancing, and Sabbath breaking.

As a lad of seventeen he entered the Parliamentary or Puritan army and apparently served for about a year. In 1647 he married a pious young woman, whose influence over

him was ennobling. Bunyan sets forth his spiritual autobiography in *Grace Abounding* (1666), a work composed in prison. Vividly he depicts his mental anguish in boyhood days, his visions of evil spirits and the terrors of hell, until his health failed and he fancied that he might lose his reason. At last he found consolation and peace through faith.



From an old print

FIG. 61. — Bunyan's Birthplace.

Bunyan possessed the force, the clearness, and the gift of language so necessary in public speaking. He began to preach in 1655. Five years later he was arrested for holding "unlawful meetings." In Bedford jail he was allowed to read, write, and preach as well as to support his family by his labor. Sometimes he was out on parole, and at last he was released in 1672 through the intercession of the Bishop of Lincoln. By this time Bunyan had become one of the most popular preachers in England, and for sixteen years he frequently addressed great crowds in London. In 1688 he was laid to rest in Bunhill cemetery.

Principal Works. — Bunyan's chief works with dates of publication are *Grace Abounding* (1666) — valuable for its author's views of his own conduct; *The Pilgrim's Progress*

(1678), which may be compared with the fifteenth-century morality play *Everyman*, a picture of a man struggling with Death; *The Holy War* (1682), describing the capture of the city of Mansoul by Satan and its recovery by Immanuel; and *The Life and Death of Mr. Badman* (1680), in which Mr. Wiseman explains why Mr. Badman has gone to a place whose climate is unsatisfactory. During his boyhood Mr. Badman found "great pleasure in robbing orchards and gardens." In church he either fell asleep or flirted. As a literary production this book deserves mention for its simple language, unconscious humor, and bold imagery.

Outline of the Pilgrim's Progress. — By far the most renowned of Bunyan's religious allegories is *The Pilgrim's Progress*, which is more like *Piers Plowman* than any other English work. The author dreams that he sees a man clothed in rags, with a heavy burden tied to his back. The man is Christian, and the burden is his sense of sin. By Evangelist's advice he resolves to flee from the wrath to come. After making his way through the miry Slough of Despond he journeys to the Wicket Gate, sees the Interpreter's House, and lingers for two days at the Palace Beautiful. In the Valley of Humiliation he is forced to fight with Apollyon (Satan). In Vanity Fair the Pilgrim (Christian) loses his companion Faithful, and with Hopeful he is later seized and thrust into a dungeon of the Giant Despair. Within three days they escape. After a time they enter the Land of Beulah, where the songs of birds never cease, and the sun shines day and night. Not far away is the Celestial City. Plainly seen are its pavements of gold and streets of pearl, but between the city and the Land of Beulah flows a river. Unending bliss lies on the other side — on the other side of that river, black and cold, over which there is no bridge.

Criticism. — Heaven seems very near and God seems very dear by the time Bunyan has finished the first part of *The*

Pilgrim's Progress. Religious allegories were familiar enough in all European countries long before the seventeenth century. No doubt, like Chaucer and others, Bunyan obtained useful hints from earlier English narratives and from translations. All this, however, in no way lessens the merit of his masterpiece, in which the phraseology of the Bible is skillfully woven into the dialogue. Again and again had Bunyan read the Bible until it became a part of his nature. It is the man's style that charms, and it charms even if we do not care to indorse all of his opinions. Bunyan reaches the heart because he wrote from the heart. He put so much life into his narrative that it is still alive.

3. *NON-DRAMATIC POETRY*

Some of the people who take pride in the classics of ancient Greece and Rome do not appreciate the qualities that make a writing classic or first-class or standard. Classic writers are clear and concise. This is not always the case with the poets of the Miltonic period. In those days, as in Shakespeare's time, almost every gentleman could write verses of some sort. It was the fashion.

John Donne (1573–1631) studied at Oxford. In his twenty-third year he sailed with Essex to fight against the Spaniards at Cadiz in Spain, and then to waylay and loot Spanish treasure ships. In 1600 Donne secretly married his cousin Anne, daughter of Sir George More. This hasty marriage led to his imprisonment and to other troubles. In 1614 the poet forsook his worldly life and became a clergyman. Nine years before his death in 1631 he preached before the Virginia Company and was recognized as one of the most thoughtful pulpit orators of the day.

Donne's poems may be divided into (1) songs and sonnets; (2) marriage songs; (3) elegies; (4) satires and epigrams;

(5) religious verse. Noble lines are on almost every page of his works. There is quaint beauty in —

> I long to talk with some old lover's ghost,

or —

> Her pure and eloquent blood
> Spoke in her deeds, and so distinctly wrought,
> That one might say her body thought,

or in the marriage song for Princess Elizabeth on St. Valentine's day,

> Hail Bishop Valentine, whose day this is;
> All the air is thy diocese,
> And all the chirping choristers
> And other birds are thy parishioners;

or the lines in *The Litany* —

> O thou, who Satan heard'st in Job's sick day,
> Hear thyself now, for Thou in us dost pray.

Donne is a poet of varied genius, whose oddities of phrase and thought repel some readers and attract others. There is a charm about the man and his work. He is full of surprises because he is independent in style. He is a rebel in the ranks of the poets, caring little about the imagery and the ideas of the older writers. He seems to begin as if poetry had never been written before, and naturally he has had many imitators.

Cavalier Lyrics. — Many lyrics of high merit were composed during the days of Shakespeare and Milton. One that is still sung is Ben Jonson's *To Celia*, beginning "Drink to me only with thine eyes." Most of the more memorable songs and other lyrics of the Miltonic period were written by Royalists or Cavaliers. Some of the Cavaliers forgot their troubles in witty or sentimental song, while others found consolation in religious lyrics. As the Civil War grew more bitter, both Cavalier and Puritan satire became common.

Secular Lyric Poets

Thomas Carew (1590?–1639), like Ben Jonson, took pains with his work. If less impassioned than some of the other poets, most of his versification is polished, as in *Persuasions to Love.*

For that lovely face will fail,
Beauty's sweet, but beauty's frail;
'Tis sooner past, 'tis sooner done
Than summer's rain or winter's sun.

Robert Herrick (1591–1674), a Devonshire clergyman, wrote delightful poems on country life. His most melodious verses are not religious, although the collection called *Noble Numbers* sparkles with the joy of the gospel as good news. How natural and direct, for instance, is *A Thanksgiving to God.*

Low is my porch, as is my fate,
Both void of state;
And yet the threshold of my door
Is worn by th' poor,
Who thither come and freely get
Good words or meat.

All of Herrick's verses were written simply as an expression of his own genial playful disposition. In variety and elegance of versification he is the most original of this group of poets, ever joyous and musical in spite of an occasional undertone of regret. A great collection of English songs is the *Hesperides,* songs composed in the west, that is, in Devonshire. Dearly he loved children and flowers, as we see in the opening lines of *To Primroses Filled With Morning Dew.*

Why do ye weep, sweet babes! Can tears
Speak grief in you,
Who were but born
Just as the modest morn
Teemed her refreshing dew?

Sir John Suckling (1609–1642), officer of a troop of horse, which he equipped at his own expense, was a jovial poet as well as a dashing soldier. Here is one of his songs.

Hast thou seen the down in the air
When wanton blasts have tost it?
Or the ship on the sea,
When ruder winds have crost it?
Hast thou mark'd the crocodiles weeping
Or the foxes sleeping?
Oh! so fickle; Oh! so vain; Oh! so false, so false is she!

Richard Lovelace (1618–1658), one of the most versatile of men, served as an officer of Charles I, and in 1646 was wounded in France. Some of his poems, dashed off in a hurry, are mediocre; others need no man's praise. This is a stanza of *To Lucasta, Going Beyond the Seas.*

Though seas and land betwixt us both,
Our faith and troth,
Like separated souls,
All time and space controls:
Above the highest sphere we meet,
Unseen, unknown, and greet as angels greet.

Religious Lyric Poets

George Herbert (1593–1632) passed his childhood days at Montgomery Castle, in Wales. His saintly life and devotional poems appealed to both Royalists and Puritans. Some of his own fine hymns he sang to the lute or viol. Herbert's style tends to be rather fanciful like that of Donne, but *The Temple*, a collection published in 1633, proved to be very popular. This is the last stanza of the *Matin Hymn.*

Teach me thy love to know;
That this new light, which now I see,
May both the work and workman show;
Then by a sunbeam I will climb to Thee.

Richard Crashaw (1613?–1650) was expelled from Cambridge in 1644, when the authorities failed to approve of his religious beliefs. If he had not followed the poetic fashion of his day, if he had been less under Donne's influence, Crashaw's real power might have asserted itself more pleasingly. *Steps to the Temple*, one of his volumes, contains *A Hymn of the Nativity* (Birth of Jesus). In it are these notable lines:

> Gloomy night embraced the place
> Where the noble infant lay:
> The babe looked up, and showed his face;
> In spite of darkness it was day.

Henry Vaughan (1622–1695), who was reared at Newton St. Bridget in South Wales, studied medicine and later lived at Brecknock. In his verses are many charming phrases. Vaughan's reputation rests upon one of his volumes, *Silex Scintillans* (Sparkling Flint). Here is a stanza from his poem called *Departed Friends*.

> And yet as angels in some brighter dreams
> Call to the soul when man doth sleep,
> So some strange thoughts transcend our wonted themes,
> And into glory peep.

John Milton (1608–1674)

Bread Street, London, was the birthplace of John Milton. His father was a shrewd man of some culture, rich enough to have a tutor to supervise his son's studies at home. In his twelfth year young Milton was sent to St. Paul's School. Night after night, when his prescribed school tasks were over, he read Latin and Greek and other books long after his parents had retired. In 1624 he went to Christ's College, Cambridge, where his appearance, his silken light hair, and his



Portrait drawn and engraved by Faithorne when Milton was 62

John Milton

FIG. 62. — John Milton.

reserve gained for him the nickname "The Lady of Christ's."

We may omit Milton's boyish experiments in verse, because in his twenty-first year he evolved his first miracle of sustained thought and melody. Immortal is the ode *On the Morning of Christ's Nativity* (1629). Milton, a musician like his father, had an ear sensitive to tones and shades of tone. He plays on the vowels as on the strings of a violin. Soft are the notes of the hymn at its opening. How it swells, stanza after stanza, till it echoes the song of the angels, then slowly it falls during the flight of ancient nymphs and deities until it sinks into repose.

In 1632 Milton had his Master's degree, and then he spent about six years in his father's country house at Horton in Buckinghamshire. Doubtless it was during this period that the landscape pictures, especially of the fourth book of *Paradise Lost*, were etched on his brain — gentle labors amid vine and orchard, sweet scenes of rosy morn and silver moon, crowned with the halo of poetic fancy. At all events the next poems are the direct outcome of this happy season in the country.



From the original Onslow portrait, by Van der Gucht

FIG. 63. — Milton at the Age of 21.

L'Allegro (1634).—The title L'Allegro is Italian for The Cheerful Man. The poem is a study in mood or temperament or "humour," as Ben Jonson has called it. L'Allegro represents any person in a cheerful mood. The poet is still unsoured by public debate or private troubles. The young Puritan finds no fault with the youths and maids dancing to the "jocund rebeck," as the bow glides over its three strings. He is pleased with the folk-lore about fairies and brownies, and even with the drama of Ben Jonson and Shakespeare. Again Milton has written a poem virtually without a flaw, exhibiting the same unity as, and a more subtle beauty of style than, *The Nativity*. Most of us recall the lines that echo the dance measure:

> Come, and trip it as ye go
> On the light fantastic toe, — 33–34.

or the reference to poetic delight —

> In notes, with many a winding bout
> Of linked sweetness long drawn out. — 139–140.

Il Penseroso (1634). — The Italian title Il Penseroso means The Thoughtful or Pensive One. Like the preceding poem it has some of the fragrance of older English, Greek, and Italian poetry, and yet it is essentially original. In form it is beyond reproach. It represents the poet or any other person in a thoughtful or serious mood, as *L'Allegro* portrays the other side of nature and human nature. Some of the lines in *Il Penseroso* are familiar. For instance, —

> Come, pensive nun, devout and pure,
> Sober, steadfast, and demure, — 31–32.

or —

> Where glowing embers through the room
> Teach light to counterfeit a gloom, — 79–80.

or —

> Of forests and enchantments drear,
> Where more is meant than meets the ear. — 119–120.

Arcades and Comus. — Three other works were composed at Horton. *Arcades* (1634) is a short pastoral masque, whose name is much the same as Sidney's *Arcadia*. Originally performed before the Dowager-Countess of Derby, it consists of three songs and a speech.

Comus (1634) is the greatest of all English masques. Its plot runs thus: A beautiful lady, lost at night in a British wood, is in the power of the magician Comus (Revelry). Her brothers search for her in vain until a kindly spirit appears in the guise of a shepherd. He gives them an herb by whose means they are able to defy enchantment. They dash into the palace, rescue their sister, and put to flight Comus and his rabble.

This masque was acted at Ludlow Castle by the family of the Earl of Bridgewater, President of Wales. Never has the theme of chastity been sung to nobler music of blank verse and lyric eloquence. One well-known passage may illustrate the style.

> He that has light within his own clear breast
> May sit i' the center, and enjoy bright day,
> But he that hides a dark soul, and foul thoughts,
> Benighted walks under the mid-day sun;
> Himself is his own dungeon. — 381–385.

Lycidas. — Early in 1638 Milton published *Lycidas*, the last of the Horton poems. It is a pastoral elegy upon the death of Edward King, who was drowned in crossing the Irish Sea. Milton and King are represented as shepherds, though they were really college friends, and there is perhaps no form of friendship so intimate, so tender, so memorable.

Lycidas is less popular than Tennyson's *In Memoriam*. The music of Milton's poem is most harmonious, but his grief might appear more convincing without the repeated classical allusions and without the threat of the headsman's

axe for religious discord. This great poem is touched with pathos in the lines —

> But oh! the heavy change, now thou art gone,
> Now thou art gone, and never must return! — 37–38.

and —

> Aye me! whilst thee the shores and sounding seas
> Wash far away where'er thy bones are hurled. 154–155.

Milton's First Marriage. — In 1638 Milton went on a visit to Italy. The desire to write an epic poem had long been in his mind, and it grew stronger in Italy. He thought of the story of Arthur as a theme, but on his return home the following year he began to devote himself to the education of his nephews, to sonnets, and to prose. When the war broke out in 1642 Milton, unlike so many other poets of this period, did not volunteer to serve in one of the English armies. In 1643 he married Mary Powell, whose family were Loyalists or Cavaliers. A month's gloom sent the young bride back to her parents for about two years, when Milton and his wife became reconciled. Three daughters were born before she died in 1652.

Prose Works. — It was during the absence of his bride that he wrote four prose works in favor of divorce. About the same time he wrote the *Areopagitica* (1644), which advocates liberty of printing or freedom of the press. Its title, of course, means facts pertaining to Areopagus, the hill on which the highest court of ancient Athens met. Milton's real meaning is that it contains facts of interest to England's highest court, the Parliament.

Among the prose pamphlets may be mentioned *The Tenure of Kings*, published in 1649. In this work Milton endeavors to show that Charles I deserved to meet the fate which had befallen his grandmother Mary, Queen of Scots. Within a month of its publication Milton was appointed as Foreign or

Latin Secretary of England, Latin being then the language of diplomacy as French is to-day. Cromwell and Milton were now the most conspicuous figures in politics, for the Puritans were in full control of the English government.

Sonnets. — One of the noblest and best known of Milton's sonnets deals with the blindness that came upon him in 1652,



Hurlbut Collection

FIG. 64. — Cromwell visits Milton.

the year of his first wife's death. He wrote the twenty-three sonnets at intervals, most of them being formed after the style of Petrarca or Petrarch, the illustrious Italian sonnet-writer. Among English writers Shakespeare alone is superior to Milton in this class of poetry.

Later Years. — Milton's second marriage in 1656 to Katharine Woodcock ended with her death fifteen months

later. Again and again he bitterly assailed his opponents until the restoration of monarchy in 1660. The poet then became so nervous that he hid for a time, but he was treated with a generosity that he had sometimes denied to others. In 1663 Elizabeth Minshull became his third wife. Four years later he published *Paradise Lost.* In 1671 appeared *Paradise Regained* and *Samson Agonistes.* Three years afterward Milton was buried in St. Giles Church, Cripplegate, London.

The Subject and the Object of Paradise Lost. — The subject or theme of *Paradise Lost* is Man, as he might have been and as he is. Adam, the representative of mankind, is supposed to be the hero; but he is as completely overshadowed by the proud figure of Satan as the Merchant of Venice is overshadowed by Shylock.

The object or purpose of this religious epic is to "justify the ways of God to man." The poet's exposition of his purpose, as set forth in twelve sections or books, has brought forth a variety of comments from scholarly readers. Paradise, of course, is man's innocence in the garden of Eden.

Plot of the Epic. — The opening scene, after a few lines of introduction, is in hell, where we behold the rebel angels who have been driven from heaven, as suggested in the last book of the New Testament. The archangel Satan, lost through too much ambition, summons the millions of fallen angels around him on the shore of the lake of fire. Then comes what is perhaps the most inspired line of blank verse that Milton ever composed. Satan's heart is touched when he thinks of the tragedy in which their loyalty to him has involved them. He tries to address the fallen angels —

> Thrice he assayed, and thrice, in spite of scorn,
> Tears such as angels weep burst forth. — Bk. I, 619–620.

Book II. — The lost angels resolve to seek revenge against God by corrupting the human creatures made in the divine image.

Book III. — Satan himself finds his way to earth.

Book IV. — He enters the Paradise of our first parents.

Book V. — God sends Raphael, a heavenly messenger, to warn Adam.

Book VI. — Raphael tells how Messiah, God's Son, had vanquished Satan in the war of Heaven.

Book VII. — Raphael relates to Adam why this world was created.

Book VIII. — Adam gives Raphael his impressions of Paradise and of the lovely Eve.

Book IX. — Satan tempts Eve to eat of the forbidden fruit, which she shares with Adam.

Book X. — God sends his Son to judge the two transgressors, and Satan returns to hell.

Book XI. — Our first parents, though penitent, are to be expelled from Paradise.

Book XII. — The angel Michael forecasts earthly events, promising Adam a divine Redeemer for mankind. Eve makes the final speech of the poem, and then —

> They, hand in hand, with wandering steps and slow,
> Through Eden took their solitary way. — 648–649.

Criticism of the Epic. — Many passages are worth memorizing. In the first book are the familiar lines —

> The mind is its own place, and in itself
> Can make a Heaven of Hell, a Hell of Heaven. — 254–255.

Paradise Lost can scarcely be called popular, partly because public taste now prefers novels to epics, yet the first two books of this poem are far more thrilling and profitable than most novels now being written. If Milton had possessed a sense of humor, Adam might not have been permitted to weary Eve with long speeches. Like Milton's first wife, Eve falls into trouble through resistance of her husband's authority.

On the other hand, the poet's fallen angels, depicted in the first two books, are the most realistic, the most interesting creations of the kind ever conceived by any man. He has produced one of the world's most marvellous poems, daring in imagination and harmonious in diction. Dante's *Divine Comedy* is the only poem at all worthy of being compared with *Paradise Lost* in sublimity of thought, and each has placed its author among the loftiest figures in literary history.

Paradise Regained (1671). — It is the temptation and the triumph of Jesus that are described in *Paradise Regained*, an epic in four books. There is a lack of chivalry in Milton's allusions to women. He allows Satan, in the second book, to say —

> For Beauty stands
> In the admiration only of weak minds
> Led captive. — 220–222.

The poet's power is still conspicuous, even if the imagery and the dramatic energy are more restrained. The masterly rhythm of the music, the breadth of culture, and the comprehensive sweep of the poet's vision would alone have brought fame to any writer.

Samson Agonistes. — Based upon the sixteenth chapter of the book of *Judges*, *Samson Agonistes* (Samson the Antagonist or Champion, 1671) recounts the tragic story of Samson, the strongest man mentioned in the Bible. This dramatic poem is written in the rigorous manner of Greek tragedy. It has, like the Greek play, a chorus taking part in the dialogue, but the poet seems to forget that the Greek lyrics in drama were intended for singing. The atmosphere of the poem is one of gloom, mainly unrelieved by pleasing description or imagery. For years Milton had not gazed upon the faces of his fellow-men, yet this last outburst of poetic creation is proof enough that the poet's vision of the unseen was as clear and impassioned as in the days of vigorous manhood.

Milton's Rank in Literary History. — Narrowness of sympathy is Milton's chief limitation as a man and as a poet. Even in his account of the heavenly vision, it is noticeable that Satan's revolt evokes no sorrow for the archangel's fatal blunder, but rather laughter at the certainty of his destruction. On the other hand, Milton arouses the highest admiration for the strength of his personality, the wealth of his learning, the majesty of his style, and the intensity of his idealism. On eagle wings he often soars above the petty interests of mankind, reaching heights unattained by any other epic poet of modern literary history.

SUMMARY

1. Much of the literature of the Miltonic period turns its attention to earthly realities, becomes dissatisfied, and seeks comfort in spiritual realities.

2. Political and literary history of the period shows the Cavaliers or Royalists on one side, and the Puritans or Parliamentary party on the other. The Authorized Version of the Bible (1611) is the outcome of an attempt to hush religious strife.

3. The three unities of classical drama are those of time, place, and action.

4. Choir-boys and schoolboys were employed on the stage, and even the men-actors used boys to play the women's parts. Plays were adapted to suit boy-actors.

5. Ben Jonson, who also wrote lyrics and prose, ranks next to Shakespeare as a dramatist. He likes to portray types or common moods or "humours" of men, a practice followed by Milton in *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso*. Jonson, a most learned poet, wrote many masques.

6. Beaumont and Fletcher, Ford, and Shirley are the other leading dramatists of this period.

7. The Puritans closed all public theatres in 1642, because they regarded many of the plays as objectionable.

8. Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy,* Walton's *Compleat Angler,* Browne's *Religio Medici,* Fuller's *Worthies,* and Taylor's *Holy Living* and *Holy Dying* are among the chief prose works of the period. Most of them are inclined to be serious.

9. Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* is the most interesting of religious allegories and the chief prose work of the period.

10. In the Miltonic period Donne is the strongest of lyric poets prior to Milton. Carew, Herrick, Suckling, and Lovelace are notable among secular poets, while Herbert, Crashaw, and Vaughan are well-known religious poets.

11. Milton's ode on *The Nativity* is the most musical poem ever written by a young man of twenty-one. *L'Allegro, Il Penseroso,* and *Comus* (a masque) are the most enjoyable of Milton's poems. *Lycidas* is a fine elegy, marred a little by threats among its tears.

12. Milton's prose is of less interest than his sublime *Paradise Lost,* an epic embracing twelve books of imperishable beauty. The sequel to it is *Paradise Regained,* whose theme is the unsuccessful temptation of Jesus by Satan. *Samson Agonistes* is a dramatic poem whose blind hero is Samson, the strongest of all men named in the Bible.

Test Questions

1. In a general way how would you express the difference between the literature of the Shakespearean period and that of the Miltonic?

2. Why is the Authorized Version of the Bible so called? After reading such books as *Genesis, Exodus, Ruth,* and *Esther,* give your own opinion of the thought and style.

3. What is meant by unity of action in a drama? Did Shakespeare sympathize with the companies of boy-actors or with the men-actors? Give a reason for your answer. How did the employment of boy-actors affect drama?

4. Name one or more of Ben Jonson's plays. Distinguish between the purpose of Jonson and that of Shakespeare. What is an anti-masque?

5. Name any other dramatist of the Miltonic period, and indicate the nature of his strength or his weakness. Do you recall any play written in Ireland? What was its nature?

6. Why is almost all the prose of this period rather serious? Illustrate by references to any prose writer whom you remember.

7. Have you read even a part of *The Pilgrim's Progress?* If not, please do so, and give your own impressions of its style and thought.

8. When is a composition in verse or prose said to be a classic?

9. Tell what you know about any one of the poets mentioned in this chapter before or after Milton.

10. Reproduce in your own words the thought of such poems as *L'Allegro, Il Penseroso, Comus,* and *Lycidas.* Which of Milton's poems do you like best? Why? Have you memorized any of the noblest passages?

ADDITIONAL AUTHORS WITH CHIEF WORKS

Dramatists. — Thomas Heywood (1572?–1650), *A Woman Killed with Kindness;* John Marston (1575?–1634), *The Malcontent;* John Webster (1580?–1625), *Duchess of Malfi;* Philip Massinger (1583–1640), *A New Way to Pay Old Debts,* a comedy still sometimes played; William D'Avenant (1605–1668), *The Siege of Rhodes,* in which a woman for the first time appeared upon the stage. This is the first English opera.

Prose Writers. — John Selden (1584–1654), *Table Talk;* Thomas Hobbes (1588–1679), *Leviathan,* dealing with politics and religion; Sir Thomas Urquhart of Cromarty (1605?–1660), *Rabelais,* a translation; Edward Hyde, Earl of Clarendon (1607–1674), *History of the Rebellion;* Richard Baxter (1615–1691), *Saints' Everlasting Rest.*

Poets. — Sir Robert Ayton of Kinaldie (1570–1638), *Woman's Inconstancy;* Phineas Fletcher (1582?–1650), *The Purple Island;* William Drummond of Hawthornden (1585–1649), *Wandering Muses;* Robert Sempill (1595?–1665?), *Habbie Simson;* Edmund Waller (1605–1687), *Go, Lovely Rose;* Samuel Butler (1612–1680), *Hudibras,* a satire named after Sir Hugh de Bras, one of the knights of the Round Table; Sir John Denham (1615–1668), *Cooper's*

Hill; Abraham Cowley (1618–1667), *The Mistress;* Andrew Marvell (1621–1678), *In the Bermudas.*

SUPPLEMENTARY READING

All the leading English Classics may be obtained in inexpensive editions published by Macmillan and other reputable firms. Besides Ward's *English Dramatic History* and other general works previously mentioned, the following books are recommended:

a. For Classes

W. Bell, *Milton's Lycidas and Comus*, N. Y. (Macmillan), $.40.

W. C. Bronson, *English Poems* (The Elizabethan Age and the Puritan Period); specimens from Wyatt to Milton, with notes, Chicago (Univ. of Chic. Press), $1.00.

John Milton, *Poetical Works*, Astor ed., N. Y. (Crowell), $.60.

F. E. Schelling, *Seventeenth Century Lyrics*, Bost. (Ginn), $.75.

b. For Teachers and Others

R. Bridges, *Milton's Prosody*, N. Y. (Oxford Press), $ 1.75.

John Brown, *John Bunyan*, Bost. (Houghton), Illus., $2.50.

John Brown, *The English Puritans*, N. Y. (Putnam's), $.40.

H. Corson, *Introduction to the Works of Milton*, N. Y. (Macmillan), $1.25.

J. Crouch, *Puritan and Art*, N. Y. (Cassell), $3.75.

E. Dowden, *Puritanism and Anglican Studies in Literature*, N. Y. (Holt), $2.00.

J. A. Froude, *John Bunyan*, N. Y. (Macmillan), Eng. Men of Letters series, $.40.

D. Masson, *Milton's Poetical Works*, N. Y. (Macmillan), Globe Poets, $1.75.

J. H. Masterman, *Age of Milton*, N. Y. (Macmillan), $1.00.

B. Nicholson and C. H. Herford, *Ben Jonson*, N. Y. (Scribner's), 3 vols., $1.00 ea. Best plays.

M. Pattison, *Milton*, N. Y. (Macmillan), E. M. L. series, $.40.

W. P. Trent, *John Milton*, N. Y. (Lemcke), $.75.

B. Wendell, *The Temper of the Seventeenth Century in English Literature*, N. Y. (Scribner's), $1.50.

CHAPTER X

THE RESTORATION PERIOD

1660–1700

THE year 1660 marks the restoration of monarchy in the British Isles and the formal restoration of drama. The reign of Charles II (1660–1685), of James II (1685–1688), and most of the reign of William III and Mary (1689–1702) may conveniently be called the Restoration Period, because all its chief features begin to appear in the year when Charles returned to the throne of his forefathers.

For nearly twenty years the Puritans had been masters of Great Britain and Ireland. They performed a noble work in awakening men's minds to the thought that man possesses a spiritual nature. Mankind, however, is so constituted that it is impossible to induce all people to think and act alike. With the restoration of monarchy, men openly followed their natural instincts. Those who were religious remained as pious as before; others gave themselves up to worldly pleasures.

Influence of the Stage. — Charles II knew very little about the people of his native land. He was but a lad of fifteen when his mother fled with him to France for safety. He was a young man of thirty when he was called to a position for which he was untrained. We are not here concerned with his faults either as a man or as a monarch, but with his influence upon the development of English literature. Educated in France at a time when French drama was by far the most illustrious in Europe, Charles naturally appreciated French

wit or comedy. He brought his courtiers and friends with him to London, a city which soon became one of the gayest in Europe. Literature of the Restoration period was written mainly by men who lived in London and cared little for rural life. Court influence became dominant, and the court had little sympathy with the austerity of manners which had prevailed for years. The fashionable life of London was largely reflected in the excesses of the Restoration comedies. If the Restoration drama was often coarse, it evidently suited some of the people who flocked to the London theatres.

Science and Prose. — A recent experiment was discussed at court no less readily than the latest play or the choicest bit of gossip. Robert Boyle (1627–1691), a younger son of the Earl of Cork, made chemistry popular, while astronomy and physics attained the highest distinction under the immortal Isaac Newton (1641–1724). Two years after Charles II returned to England, the Royal Society was founded in London to stimulate the growth of scientific knowledge, and in 1680 the king granted a charter to the Royal College of Physicians in Edinburgh. Thus, in the north as well as in the south, scientific pursuits appear to have received the encouragement of royalty.

Prose, of course, is the natural language of science, and it is significant that both science and prose acquired a new vigor about the same time. It is a mistake, however, to suppose that the new interest in science led to a new style of prose. The truth is that the growth of science and of prose sprang from the same cause — an intense desire to attain clearness of thought and expression. It was a time of curiosity in regard to things earthly rather than things heavenly. The new simplicity of style sprang from a new earnestness of purpose.

The development of English prose is the most brilliant achievement of Restoration literature. The prose of Browne

and Milton, admirable as it is in some respects, never could become popular. What was needed was a style more clear, more terse, more in touch with the language of everyday use. The need was met by a change in prose, which was really a part of the same literary movement that affected poetry. France, dominating all literary Europe, insisted upon the charm that springs from lucid, orderly composition. A change of this sort became necessary not merely to suit the taste or fashion of the time, but to put new life into the expanding intellect of Britain.

1. *PROSE*

John Locke (1632–1704). — A philosophy is a general opinion of the world in which we dwell. During the Restoration period John Locke was the most eminent of philosophers, and he employed that plain style of prose which the Royal Society had urged upon its members. When Locke left Christ Church, Oxford, he was of the opinion that words often took the place of facts. His writings made a deep impression upon the thought and literature of all Europe.

Locke was employed to draw up a constitution for the government of Carolina, but his best-known works are: (1) the famous *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1690), a book in which he tries to explain how the mind acquires knowledge through experience or the use of the senses; (2) two essays on *Civil Government* (1690), used later by the Americans who prepared the Declaration of Independence, for they borrowed from him such phrases as "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness"; (3) the essay called *Thoughts Concerning Education* (1698), a work used by some of the chief thinkers in France; and (4) *Letters on Toleration*, issued at intervals, pleading for toleration in religious matters.



From the painting by Hayls, National Portrait Gallery

FIG. 65. — Samuel Pepys.

Samuel Pepys (1633–1703) is not generally known as a former president of the Royal Society, but as the author of a gossiping diary. Educated at Cambridge, he resided in London with his cousin Sir Edward Montagu, later Earl of Sandwich, who was one of the three Puritans that helped to bring Charles II to the throne. From 1660 to 1669 Pepys (pronounced *Peps*) day by day recorded in shorthand many of the sayings and doings of himself and others, without a thought that his *Diary* would ever be published. In spite of its author's vanity, his work is an amusing as well as valuable record of social life in seventeenth-century London.



From an Edinburgh portrait

FIG. 66. — Sir George Mackenzie.

Sir George Mackenzie (1636–1690) of Rosehaugh is "that noble wit of Scotland," as Dryden calls him. He was Lord Advocate under Charles II and James II, and he was the founder of the great Advocates' Library in Edinburgh. Besides verses, essays, and memoirs he wrote a heroic romance entitled *Aretina* (1661). Many passages are polished as well as dignified, and his work has value in being one of the forerunners of the historical romance created by Sir Walter Scott.

2. *DRAMA*

Heroic Verse. — Heroic verse is verse that is supposed to be most suitable for heroic or lofty themes. Heroic verse is employed in epic as well as dramatic poetry, and its form varies in different countries. The Restoration writers of heroic plays made use of heroic couplets mingled with blank verse or prose. A heroic couplet, of course, consists of two successive lines of ten syllables, each line riming with the other. Here is a heroic couplet from Dryden's *Aureng-zebe:*

> 'Tis not for nothing that we life pursue;
> It pays our hopes with something still that's new.

Operas and Heroic Plays. — Every tragedy written partly in rime was regarded as a heroic play. It was really in 1656 that English opera and the English heroic play came into existence. The *Siege of Rhodes*, the work of Sir William D'Avenant (1605–1668), appeared in 1656. It was termed opera, partly to avoid trouble with the Puritans, and partly because singing directly advances the action of the play. It is a story of love with a background of war. Indeed the whole action of Restoration drama, tragic as well as comic, turns upon various phases of love.

During this period music came to be recognized as essential to a properly conducted playhouse. Opera is drama based upon music, whereas the heroic play employs music as an incident in working out the plot. Operas and heroic plays employ rime, and both are concerned with love and friendship.

The Comedy of Manners. — Comedy does not mingle well with heroic tragedy, although tragi-comedy endeavors to have the lofty style of tragedy with a happy ending. Restoration comedy is chiefly satire. It professes to portray the weaknesses of society, and as a rule it is written in prose. Neither the heroic plays nor the comedies of this period

appear to-day on the stage, mainly because they appeal to a limited class of people. Public taste has changed completely.

Thomas Otway (1651–1685) was inclined to be too impulsive. After leaving Oxford he served for a time as a cavalry officer. He achieved his first theatrical success as author of the tragedy of *Don Carlos* (1676), written in rime. Two years later appeared *The Orphan*, one of the best of his tragedies. In spite of serious defects its blank verse is the medium of a tenderness which can scarcely fail to impress the reader. Monimia, the unfortunate heroine, must have called forth many a sob in the old London theatre. In the delineation of pathetic scenes Otway is a master, and it is to his power in this respect that he is indebted for his position in English literary history. In 1682 appeared the finest of all his tragedies, *Venice Preserved*, suggestive at times of Shakespeare's *Othello*. The greatest scene is that in which the heroine Belvidera saves her father and the State.

William Congreve (1670–1729), an Englishman by birth, was educated at the grammar school of Kilkenny in Ireland and at Trinity College, Dublin. Most of his plays are comedies, the ablest of which is *The Way of the World* (1700). In this play is Millamant, the most remarkable of Congreve's heroines. The dialogue has the fine French qualities of wit, ease, and precision. Most of the men in Congreve's plays are rascals, even if their language is polished. *The Mourning Bride*, a tragedy in blank verse, was produced in 1697. Two of its lines have been frequently quoted:

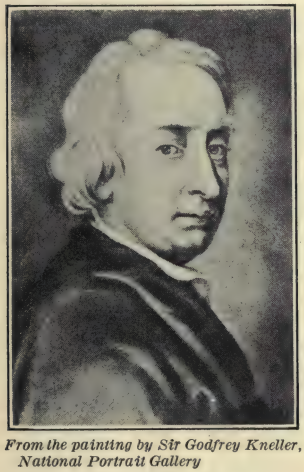
> Music hath charms to soothe a savage breast,
> To soften rocks, or bend a knotted oak. — Act I, Sc. i.

George Farquhar (1678–1707), a native of Londonderry, was an actor in Dublin until he severely wounded a fellow-player in a duel on the stage. His best comedy is *The Beaux' Stratagem* (1707), written shortly before his death. The plot

is clever, and the play is of historic interest as the forerunner of sentimental dramas such as Goldsmith's *She Stoops to Conquer*.

John Dryden (1631–1700)

The most eminent literary man of this period was John Dryden, whose birth gave a place on the map to Aldwinkle, a village in Northamptonshire. John was the son of Erasmus, who was the third son of Sir Erasmus Driden. In his nineteenth year the lad became a student at Cambridge, where he was known to Pepys, the diarist. Four years later his father's death left him in possession of a small estate.



From the painting by Sir Godfrey Kneller, National Portrait Gallery

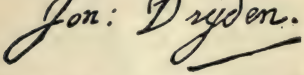


Fig. 67. — John Dryden.

Young Dryden's first poem of any consequence is entitled *Heroic Stanzas* (1658) in honor of Cromwell, who died shortly before. He may or may not have been inspired by a sincere appreciation of Cromwell. All that we know is that the young poet makes no bitter remarks about those who fought on either side during the Civil War. Already he begins to show that he understands how to create heroic couplets, even if he has not yet acquired self-confidence. Like Milton in his youth, Dryden employs the conceits of the so-called metaphysical poets. Donne, for instance, is called metaphysical in the sense that many of his figures of speech are beyond what is natural.

In 1660 Dryden produced a more successful poem, *Astræa*

Redux (The Returning Star), wherein he celebrates the return of Charles II to the throne of his forefathers. Three years later the poet married Lady Elizabeth Howard, daughter of the Earl of Berkshire, and in the same year he began to write plays in order to add to his income.

The year 1667 saw Milton's *Paradise Lost* as well as the death of Jeremy Taylor, the birth of Swift, and the publication of Dryden's *Annus Mirabilis* (The Wonderful Year). This poem was written to portray the wonders of the year 1666; namely, naval victories over the Hollanders or Dutch, and the Great Fire which raged for five days and reduced two-thirds of London to ashes. In 1680 Dryden became poet-laureate, a position which he held for about eight years. The first of his translations appeared in 1680, and the following year witnessed the earliest of his bold, forceful satires in verse.

With mental power unabated, Dryden continued to write translations of Virgil and other ancient classics as well as adaptations of Chaucer. For many years at Will's Coffee House in London he had ruled supreme, acknowledged as the most brilliant literary man of his time. He died in May, 1700, and was laid to rest near Chaucer in Westminster Abbey.

Dryden's Plays. — Few people really believe that Restoration drama is a faithful picture of all phases of seventeenth-century society in England. If Dryden had refrained from play writing, his reputation would in no way have suffered. His plays are seldom read, because they do not possess those qualities that enable literary works to stand the test of time. Like so many of the plays of this period they are not strong in delineating the nobler side of human nature; indeed they are coarse. On the other hand, it is only fair to say that most of them are full of action, and that the diction is almost always brilliant.

Perhaps the best of Dryden's plays is *All for Love* (1678). Modelled upon Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra*, this tragedy has a well-constructed plot, and it contains some notable lines of real pathos.



Fig. 68. — Westminster Abbey — Poet's Corner.

Dryden's Prose. — Dryden's prose, chiefly critical, exhibits the versatility and power of his genius. His essays consist mainly of prefaces and dedications to his own works. The most famous of the essays are the *Dramatic Poesy* (1665) and the *Preface to the Fables* (1700). If we allow for his personal prejudices, we cannot but admire their insight and good sense. The former essay is in the form of a dialogue aboard a vessel on the river Thames, the speakers being Lord Buckhurst, Sir Robert Howard (Dryden's brother-in-law),

Sir Charles Sedley, and the poet himself, all under assumed names. The object of the essay is to defend the English stage against the French and to plead for the use of rime in tragedy. This is how it begins:

> It was that memorable day, in the first summer of the late war, when our navy engaged the Dutch; a day wherein the two most mighty and best appointed fleets which any age had ever seen, disputed the command of the greater half of the globe, the commerce of nations, and the riches of the universe.

Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Arnold are the only other poets whose literary criticism is so penetrating. As a writer of prose, Dryden followed no man, because there was no man superior to himself in this form of composition. He was a pioneer. A master of the more subtle allurements of prose rhythm, his manner is dignified without being stilted, and free without being slovenly. He is never wearisome, because he has vigor and variety. It was he who helped to shape English speech so that it became an instrument ready for science, history, fiction, or any purpose outside of poetry.

The Political Satires in Verse. — In order to understand the political satires, we need to remember that the Cavaliers or Loyalists became known as Tories in Dryden's day, and they are the Conservatives of British politics at the present time. The Puritans came to be known as Whigs, and they are the present Liberal party in British politics. Tory and Whig are nicknames, the former being an Irish word and the latter Scottish. Our interest in Dryden's political verses is purely literary.

Absalom and Achitophel (1681) is the most effective political satire ever written. It is an attack upon the Whig Earl of Shaftesbury (Achitophel), then in the Tower of London awaiting trial for supporting the claims of the Duke of Monmouth (Absalom) to succeed Charles II (King David).

Both the persons and the places in this caustic allegory bear Scriptural names, London being called Jerusalem, while the English are termed Jews, and England is Israel.

This allegory reveals the new interest of man in man. Its portraits reflect the new interest in human character, which sprang from the Civil War. Such sketches helped to prepare the way for that later delight in the analysis of character, a delight which called into existence the periodical essays of journalism and the novels of Fielding and others. Some of the more piquant lines of the satire are:

> A man so various that he seemed to be,
> Not one, but all mankind's epitome;
> Stiff in opinions, always in the wrong,
> Was everything by turns and nothing long. — 545.
>
> So over violent, or over civil,
> That every man with him was God or Devil. — 557.
>
> Great wits are sure to madness near allied,
> And thin partitions do their bounds divide. — 163.

Shaftesbury, found not guilty of treason, was released from the Tower a few days after the appearance of *Absalom and Achitophel*. The Whigs were so happy that they began to wear a medal stamped with Shaftesbury's likeness, and this suggested the title to Dryden's second political satire. *The Medal* (1682) possesses less sparkle, less fire, less playfulness, than its predecessor, though the language is as keen and polished as ever.

The Literary Satire. — In 1682 appeared *Mac Flecknoe*, a scathing satire on Thomas Shadwell (1640–1692), a playwright and versifier who apparently circulated a baseless scandal concerning Dryden. The reason for choosing such a title is obvious. Richard Flecknoe was a man well known in London, whose name had become proverbial for his

wretched verses. Shadwell is represented as his adopted son, who is to succeed him as monarch of the realm of Dullness and Nonsense. This amusing poem, which suggested to Pope the *Dunciad,* runs thus:

> Shadwell alone, of all my sons, is he
> Who stands confirmed in full stupidity.
> The rest to some faint meaning make pretence,
> But Shadwell never deviates into sense. — 15.

Religious Didactic Poems. — A didactic poem, of course, is one that is intended to convey instruction. It may concern itself with any topic that has human interest. *Religio Laici* (Religion or Faith of a Layman) is a religious didactic poem, of the year 1682. One of its most admired passages may be quoted:

> Dim as the borrowed beams of moon and stars
> To lonely, weary, wandering travellers,
> Is Reason to the soul: and as on high,
> Those rolling fires discover but the sky,
> Not light us here; so Reason's glimmering ray
> Was lent, not to assure our doubtful way,
> But guide us upward to a better day. — 1–7.

Another poem of a similar nature is *The Hind and the Panther* (1687), an allegory in which "the milk-white hind, unspotted and unchanged" is the Catholic Church, and the Panther is the Church of England. Some of its more familiar lines are these:

> For truth has such a face and such a mien,
> As to be loved needs only to be seen. — Pt. I, 33–34.

> For friendship, of itself an holy tie,
> Is made more sacred by adversity. — Pt. III, 47–48.

> Two magnets, heaven and earth, allure to bliss;
> The larger loadstone that, the nearer this. — Pt. III, 368–369.

Lyric Poems. — Besides some rare songs scattered through his plays, Dryden wrote the *Song for St. Cecilia's Day* (1687), and *Alexander's Feast* (1697), both odes in honor of St. Cecilia, the patron saint of music. *Alexander's Feast*, which was set to music by Handel in 1736, is probably the most popular of Dryden's poems. In variety of measure and beauty of imagery it ranks as one of the finest odes in the English language. Every one is familiar with —

> None but the brave deserves the fair,

and —

> He raised a mortal to the skies;
> She drew an angel down.

Dryden as a Man of Letters. — Dryden was by far the greatest writer of the Restoration period, and it was his influence that gave its color to the period which followed. His themes are chiefly of the men and the conditions of his own time. Had he been merely a playwright, he might have been forgotten long ago. It is in non-dramatic poetry and in prose writing that his genius is best displayed. He it was who created modern prose. He it was who gave the highest distinction to the heroic couplet, to the metrical satire, and to literary criticism. His powerful intellect, his superb sense of form, his versatility, stamp Dryden as one of the foremost men of letters in English literary history.

SUMMARY

1. Literature of the Restoration period was written mainly in London by men who had little interest in the rural districts.
2. The court influenced science, art, and literature.
3. Locke, who tried to show how we acquire knowledge, pointed out that the basis of government is the will of the people. Pepys's *Diary* throws light upon the social life of the seventeenth century.

4. Mackenzie's heroic romance helped to prepare the way for Scott's historical romances.

5. In the Restoration period what was called heroic verse was supposed to be best fitted to set forth heroic or dignified topics. It was therefore used for heroic plays or tragedies. Heroic plays are also known as riming plays, because they are written largely in heroic couplets or pairs of ten-syllabled lines that rime with each other. These couplets were also employed in satires and other forms of non-dramatic verse.

6. In opera the actors sing their parts rather than speak them as in an ordinary play. English opera was at first a modification of French opera. Love is the chief theme of Restoration opera and regular drama.

7. Otway's tragedies, such as *Venice Preserved*, are noted for pathos or tenderness. Congreve's tragedy, *The Mourning Bride*, is better known than his comedies. Farquhar's *Beaux' Stratagem* is a sort of stepping-stone from the comedy of this period to that of Goldsmith.

8. In his youth Dryden was naturally somewhat influenced by the kind of poetry that was most fashionable during the Miltonic period. Because of its fanciful or unnatural figures of speech, it is sometimes called metaphysical poetry, though the term is not a very happy one.

9. Dryden composed the cleverest political satire ever written in English verse. In his day Cavaliers or Loyalists were called Tories, whereas Puritans came to be known as Whigs.

10. Dryden gained fame (*a*) as the creator of modern prose, (*b*) as a literary critic, (*c*) as a master of the heroic couplet, (*d*) as the ablest writer of satirical verse, and (*e*) as a translator of Virgil and other ancient classics. *Alexander's Feast* is his most popular poem.

Test Questions

1. How may we account for the remarkable development of science and of prose during the Restoration period?
2. What literary benefit did England derive from France at this time?
3. What is philosophy? How did Locke's writings affect America and France?
4. In what respect does Pepys's *Diary* resemble an autobiography?
5. Indicate the chief value of George Mackenzie's contribution to English literature.
6. Wherein do operas and heroic plays resemble each other?
7. Name one Restoration play and its heroine. Do you remember a line from one of the plays?
8. Tell what you know concerning the object of Dryden's essay on *Dramatic Poesy.*
9. What is meant by saying that *Absalom and Achitophel* is "an attack upon the Whig Earl of Shaftesbury"? Quote one of its heroic couplets.
10. Explain the phrase "didactic poem." Illustrate by reference to one of Dryden's poems. Repeat one of the most memorable lines in *Alexander's Feast.*

ADDITIONAL AUTHORS WITH CHIEF WORKS

Prose Writers. — John Evelyn (1620–1706), *Diary;* Robert Boyle of Lismore (1627–1691), *Occasional Reflections;* Isaac Barrow (1630–1677), *Sermons;* Gilbert Burnet (1643–1715), *History of My Own Times* — really memoirs; William Dampier (1652–1715), *Voyage Round the World,* — a buccaneer for a time; then as commander of a privateer he put Alexander Selkirk (hero of *Robinson Crusoe*) ashore on the island of Juan Fernandez, which is over 400 miles west of Chile, South America; Andrew Fletcher of Saltoun (1653–1716), *Regulation of Governments.* Fletcher's most famous saying is, "If a man were permitted to make all the ballads, he need not care who should make the laws of a nation."

Dramatists. — Sir George Etherege (1634–1691), *The Man of Mode;* William Wycherley (1640–1715), *The Plain Dealer;* Nathaniel Lee (1653?–1692), *The Rival Queens.*

SUPPLEMENTARY READING

Palamon and Arcite, rival lovers of Emilia, appear in one of Chaucer's Canterbury Tales. Dryden's *Palamon and Arcite* may be obtained for about twenty-five cents from Macmillan (Pocket Classics), Ginn, Heath, Longmans, Houghton Mifflin (Riverside series), American Book Co., Silver Burdett, etc.

a. For Classes

J. C. Collins, *Satires of Dryden*, N. Y. (Macmillan), $.40.

M. W. Croll, *Dryden to Burns: Lyric Poems*, N. Y. (Holt), $.30.

R. Garnett, *Pepys's Diary*, 2 vols., N. Y. (Dutton). Each $.35. Everyman's Library.

F. T. Palgrave, *Golden Treasury*, N. Y. (Macmillan), Pocket Classics, $.25. Standard School Library, $.50, by same firm. Includes Dryden and others. The same work is also published by the Oxford Press (N. Y.) at $.35, as one of The World's Classics series, and by Longmans, Green (N. Y.) at $.25.

b. For Teachers and Others

L. N. Chase, *The English Heroic Play*, N. Y. (Lemcke), $2.00.

W. D. Christie, *Dryden's Poetical Works*, N. Y. (Macmillan), $1.75. Globe Poets. Crowell (N. Y.) has the Astor edition of Dryden at $.60, and the Oxford Press (N. Y.) has editions at $.50 and $1.75.

A. C. Fraser, *Locke*, Philadelphia (Lippincott), $.50.

R. Garnett, *Age of Dryden*, N. Y. (Macmillan), $1.00.

Sir E. Gosse, *Restoration Plays*, N. Y. (Dutton), $.35. Everyman's.

W. P. Ker, *Dryden's Essays*, 2 vols., N. Y. (Oxford Press), $2.75.

J. R. Lowell, *Among My Books*, 2 vols., Bost. (Houghton), $2.00. Contains essay on Dryden

P. Lubbock, *Pepys*, N. Y. (Scribner's), $1.00.

G. W. E. Russell, *Evelyn's Diary*, 2 vols., N. Y. (Dutton). Each $.35.

G. Saintsbury, *Dryden*, N. Y. (Harper), $.75.

R. L. Stevenson, *Familiar Studies of Men and Books*, N. Y. (Scribner's), $1.00. Includes Pepys.

W. Strunk, *Dryden's All For Love*, Boston (Heath), $.60.

CHAPTER XI

THE CLASSICAL PERIOD

1700–1760

Scenes Linked with Culloden. — We are standing on the battlefield of Culloden, a northeast wind whipping the sleet into our eyes. Five miles distant is Inverness, the capital of the Scottish Highlands. Do you see this spring? Here it was that the giant chief of the clan Mackintosh fell dead from his wounds as, with his last strength, he bore to the spring a little wounded drummer-boy whom he had heard at his side moaning for water. To this day a shadow rests upon the memory of the Duke of Cumberland, leader of the government forces, who was popularly known as "Billy the Butcher." To-day round the oval moorland of the last battle fought in the British Isles are thick fir-woods, dark and mournful as they guard the secrets of northern valor and chivalry.

Scope of the Classical Period. — The battle of Culloden was one of the political events that occurred during what is usually called the classical period of English literature, and there never was a time when British politics and literature were more closely related. Two years after Dryden's death Queen Anne began to reign, and she was followed in 1714 by George I, a German, who came to the British throne by reason of his Stuart ancestry. The classical period may be said to comprise the sixty years that end with the close of the reign of George II in 1760. All that is meant, of course, is that at this time the classical tendency is uppermost in the efforts of its leading writers.

The classical period, as this chapter is entitled, is so called because most of the writers of the first half of the eighteenth century based their work upon that of the ancient Greeks and Romans. In other words, they tried to reproduce such qualities of the ancients as simplicity, polish, and correctness of form. So far as the eighteenth-century writers are natural and reasonable, they are truly classical. So far as they cripple themselves by needless rules or by imperfect observation, they are unclassical.

Why was there a Classical Period? — This period or phase of English literature seems to have been the outcome of (1) The Literature of France, (2) The Growth of English Thought, and (3) Changes in Politics.

During the reign of Louis XIV (1653–1715) the literature of France surpassed that of any country in Europe. Molière (1622–1673) wrote comedies that live to this day, and he had brilliant successors. Naturally the writers of England desired the same success as those of France. The French strove for polish, conciseness, good sense, as opposed to wild flights of fancy. If their method seemed to restrain imagination in poetry, it certainly did much good in the sphere of prose.

The growth of English thought, especially in science and philosophy, needed for its expression the very qualities that distinguish French prose. Pascal in France, with his clear, exact phrases, was the forerunner of Newton, the English scientist. Any one who reads the prose of the time of Shakespeare and Milton, and compares it with that of Dryden or Defoe will see that Dryden began what Defoe and others continued to improve. If France showed England how to write letters and essays and other forms of prose, England repaid the debt by adding to the wealth of French thought.

During this period the relation between politics and literature was closer than ever before. Parliament had become

more powerful than the crown. In 1657 there was only one coffee-house in London, whereas in 1708 there were three thousand coffee-houses, many of which had their little companies of merchants, politicians, or men of letters. The coffee-house of Wills was really a literary club where Pope as a boy had heard Dryden discussing topics of the day. Addison met his admirers at the coffee-house of Buttons. It was at such places that the leading statesmen became acquainted with literary men, and began to use their talents for one or other of the political parties. Thus the town clubs came to wield a greater influence than the court. It was the political changes of this period that brought journalism to the front, making it a power in shaping the destiny of literature as well as society. Satire in verse or prose, amusing friends or ridiculing rivals, was much more welcome than love-poetry or any form of verse that did not adjust itself to such social conditions.

Growth of Journalism.—During this period the first daily newspaper of London appeared on March 12, 1702 as *The Daily Courant*, but it was Defoe's *Review* (1704–1713) that began to make journalism national in its influence. The earliest newspaper, more or less in close touch with the government, was *The Examiner*, which was written by Swift from November, 1710 to June, 1711. As a rival news organ Addison started *The Whig Examiner*, but only three numbers were issued. Its successor was *The Medley*, to which Steele at times contributed. In 1745 Fielding was writing for a Whig paper entitled *The True Patriot*, and his sarcastic *Jacobite Journal* (1747–1748) was intended to mock at those who sympathized with the army defeated at the battle of Culloden.

Thus almost all prominent literary men were writing for the Whigs, most of whom resided in the towns, or for the Tories, whose strength lay in the country. The bulk of the contributors, however, were hack writers, that is, men who

depended upon publishers for their daily bread. Many of them earned very little money, and as a whole they came to be known as *Grub Street*, from the London street which they frequented.

1. *PROSE WRITERS*

Daniel Defoe (1659–1731)

One of the most versatile writers of this period was Daniel Defoe, whose birth occurred in London in 1659. He attended a school controlled by the Nonconformists or Dissenters, who were and are English Protestants that dissent from some of the opinions of the Church of England. At school he learned how to write the mother tongue, and then he engaged in trade with little success.



From a portrait by Grosch

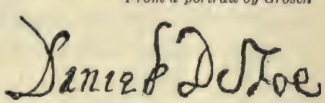


Fig. 69. — Daniel Defoe.

It was in 1702 that Defoe published an ironical pamphlet called *Shortest Way with the Dissenters*. It pretended to advise the government to get rid of Dissenters by hanging or banishing them, but in reality it was an attack upon the Tories. Neither the Whigs nor the Tories liked Defoe's joke, and so he was fined as well as imprisoned. When a reward was offered for Defoe's arrest, he was described as a middle-sized thin man, with dark brown hair, hooked nose, gray eyes, and a large mole near his mouth. In 1706 he was acting as a government spy or secret-service man in Scotland.

Defoe was the most brilliant journalist of the early eighteenth century. He knew that nothing so interests the average reader as a plain story of events that are or seem to be real, and by his attention to detail he made fiction look like fact. His writings again brought trouble upon him, for he was once more fined and imprisoned.

Robinson Crusoe. — Defoe was nearly sixty years of age when he wrote *Robinson Crusoe* (1719), one of the best stories ever written. It is based upon Captain Rogers's narrative of the adventures of Alexander Selkirk, the Scottish sailor who was marooned (1704) on Juan Fernandez, an island 425 miles west of Chile, South America. Defoe's story has been a source of delight to generations of readers. Stevenson's *Treasure Island* is its only rival in our language.

The Plot of Robinson Crusoe. — Robinson Crusoe runs away from home and joins a ship. On one of his voyages he is seized by pirates, but after a time he escapes. On another voyage his ship is wrecked, and he alone is cast ashore on a desert island. He builds a house, and supplies himself with food and clothes. He catches and tames wild goats.

One day he is startled to see the track of a naked foot on the beach. Cannibals visit the island in canoes, bringing prisoners for a feast of human flesh. Crusoe is able to set one of the captives free, and Friday, as he calls the young savage, becomes his servant. Finally an English ship carries him back to his native land. Thus we see how Crusoe, by self-reliance, common sense, and industry, overcomes every difficulty.

The book is noted for (1) its lifelike details that make the story look real, (2) the ease of its diction, (3) the variety of thrilling incident calling for quick judgment, (4) its allegorical picture of the struggle that mankind must have experienced in rising to the comforts of civilization.

Other Chief Works. — Defoe was one of the most prolific

of writers. Before his death in 1731 about 250 separate works, not counting small sheets, are known to have come from his pen. His *Journal of the Plague Year* (1722) is written with such detail that it looks like authentic history. It professes to be an account of the Great Plague of London, as witnessed by the narrator in 1665. The hero once saw people gazing upon " a ghost walking on a grave stone."

Among Defoe's other writings *Captain Singleton* (1720), *Moll Flanders* (1722), and *Jonathan Wild* (1725) point the way to the real novel in which character is portrayed. They are picaresque stories, picaresque being an adjective derived from the Spanish *picaro*, a rogue. Each is a novel in which a rogue is the leading character.

Under other circumstances Defoe might have been a rich man, but his courage was always superior to his judgment. He had never learned that there are times when silence is golden.

Jonathan Swift (1667–1745)

Dublin, the capital of Ireland, became Jonathan Swift's birthplace in 1667. After his education at Kilkenny Grammar School and at Trinity College, Dublin, he went to England, taking up his residence with Sir William Temple, whose wife was a relative of Swift's mother. There he acted as tutor of Esther Johnson, a child of six who had practically been adopted by the Temples.

In his twenty-fourth year Swift obtained a degree at Oxford. In 1695 he was a clergyman at Kilroot near Belfast in Ireland. Next year he was back at Moor Park in Surrey, the home of the Temples, and there he seems to have acquired an affection for Esther Johnson. She kept his letters, which were afterward published as the *Journal to Stella.* He addressed her as Stella (Star), and for years they were friends. If Swift did not marry her, it was because he al-

ways feared that he would become insane, and as a matter of fact he lost his reason about four years before his death.



From the painting ascribed to Bindon, National Gallery of Ireland

Jonath: Swift.

FIG. 70. — Jonathan Swift.

In 1710 he became an intimate friend of the leader of the Tory party, but Queen Anne opposed the attempt to make Swift the Bishop of Hereford. He is commonly known as Dean Swift, because in 1713 he became Dean of St. Patrick's, Dublin. For years pamphlets, satires, and poems came from his pen in astonishing numbers. He voiced the grievances of Ireland in his *Drapier's Letters* (1724), a work which professes to be written by M. B., Drapier (draper or dry-goods merchant).

One of the most remarkable of the satires is *A Modest Proposal* (1729). The proposal is that children of poor people in Ireland should be sent with the sheep and oxen to the butcher. Of course, Swift did not really mean what he wrote. It is an attack upon the government leaders of George II, because Dean Swift believed that their way of governing Ireland would bring starvation to many of the Irish people. When Swift died in his seventy-eighth year, it was found that he had left his money to a hospital for lunatics. He was buried in St. Patrick's Cathedral, in the same grave with Stella, who had died seventeen years before. After his death, on



FIG. 71. — St. Patrick's Cathedral.

an envelope containing a tress of hair, was seen in Swift's handwriting, "Only a woman's hair!"

The Battle of the Books. — A discussion that arose in France passed to England, and led to Swift's *Battle of the Books* (1697). With mock dignity it describes a battle in the King's Library. The ancient classical and the modern books come down from their shelves, and fight until the Ancients are victorious.

The Tale of a Tub. — About the year 1698 Swift wrote a religious allegory, *The Tale of a Tub*, which is supposed to be like a tub that sailors fling out in order to divert a whale from ramming or capsizing their ship. The author desires to save or to warn the ship known as the State. Peter (the Catholic Church) and Martin (Lutheran Church and Church of England) and Jack (churches that follow John Calvin) are three brothers, who quarrel about the interpretation of their father's will (the Bible). More than half of the book contains a satire on the life and authorship of Swift's time. Some people thought that the author held all forms of religion up to ridicule, but it is scarcely likely that this was his intention. He often joked with a solemn face. "The reason why so few marriages are happy," he once remarked, "is because young ladies spend their time in making nets, not in making cages."



From a pen-and-ink sketch

FIG. 72. — Gulliver and the Lilliputians.

Gulliver's Travels. — The one book that makes Swift's name familiar to this day is *Gulliver's Travels* (1726), Gulliver being supposed to be at first a ship-surgeon, who tells of his extraordinary adventures in the course of four voyages. In

the first Gulliver comes to the country of Lilliput, whose inhabitants, about six inches high, fasten him to the ground. In the second he visits Brobdingnag, where the people are sixty feet in height. The third voyage takes Lemuel Gulliver to Laputa, an island inhabited by philosophers and others; while the last voyage leads him to the land of the Yahoos, a degraded race of human beings.

The whole reading world was dazzled and delighted by this work of fiction, the first to appear as a newspaper serial. No allegory, except Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, has so charmed the youth of each generation since it was published. It is really, of course, a political and social satire, the most brilliant ever written. One familiar sentence runs thus:

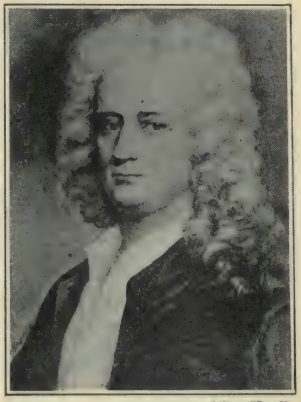
> And he gave it for his opinion, that whoever could make two ears of corn or two blades of grass to grow upon a spot of ground where only one grew before, would deserve better of mankind and do more essential service to his country than the whole race of politicians put together.

Swift's Place in Literary History. — A kind heart throbbed within the bosom of the man whom some people considered proud and cold. Idolized in his later years by the Irish, who liked his honesty as well as his wit and humor, Swift had numerous admirers in England. Addison declared that he was "the most agreeable companion, the truest friend, and the greatest genius of his age." Even his political opponents perceived that society had derived much benefit from those fearless onslaughts that have no parallel until we reach Carlyle in the nineteenth century. Less simple in style than Defoe, Swift is more original. Indeed it is probable that he had a stronger intellect and a more forceful style in prose than any writer of this period.

Joseph Addison (1672–1719)

Quotations from the Spectator. — These are quotations from *The Spectator*, a journal whose articles were written mostly by Addison and Steele:

> "The hours of a wise man are lengthened by his ideas, as those of a fool are by his passions."
>
> "I would have every zealous man examine his heart thoroughly, and I believe he will often find that what he calls zeal for his religion is either pride, interest, or ill-nature."
>
> "Though a man has all other perfections, and wants discretion, he will be of no great consequence in the world. Without it learning is pedantry, and wit impertinence; virtue itself looks like weakness."



After Kneller

J Addison.

Fig. 73. — Joseph Addison.

Addison's Poetry. — Joseph Addison's native parish was Milston in Wiltshire. As an undergraduate at Oxford he attracted notice by the ease with which he recited Latin verse. In his twenty-second year (1694) he addressed some verses to Dryden, whose acquaintanceship was a source of pleasure to young Addison.

The Whigs wished to add to their power by advertising Marlborough's victory at Blenheim (1704) over the French and Bavarians, and they believed that poetry would lend dignity to the party as well as to the battle. Details of the political situation may be found in Thackeray's *Henry Esmond*. Addison was engaged to write *The Campaign*, a poem which helped the Whig party and helped the poet to

various government positions. Although he wrote hymns and other verses, it is not as a poet that Addison is remembered to-day.

Addison's Prose. — Addison was in Ireland when Richard Steele issued the first number of *The Tatler* (1709–1711). Both men contributed to this periodical and to its successor *The Spectator* (1711–1714), which like *The Tatler* was started by Steele. Their literary reputation is linked mainly with their work for these publications, work which still attracts by its genial humor, its graceful style, and its skill in character drawing. *The Vision of Mirza* and the sketches of *Roger de Coverley* are among the most memorable prose writings in our language.

Addison's Dramas. — To the men of his own day Addison's literary fame rested upon a Roman tragedy which was performed at Drury Lane, London, in 1713. A crowded house witnessed *Cato,* and for more than a month the play was performed night after night. Even the Tories admitted that it was a work of great ability, although both parties fancied that it was a political play in disguise. Pope told its author that it was better fitted to be read than played. Two of its best-known lines are:

> 'Tis not in mortals to command success,
> But we'll do more, Sempronius, we'll deserve it.
> — Act I, Sc. ii, 44–45.

In his forty-fourth year Addison wrote *The Drummer,* an unsuccessful comedy, and the same year he married the Dowager-Countess of Warwick. In his forty-eighth year the genial essayist died. His tomb is in Westminster Abbey.

The Spectator's Conception of a Gentleman. — *The Spectator* caused (1) a change for the better in society, (2) greater refinement in literature, and (3) a new appreciation of the choicest English literature of bygone days.

"The great and only end of these my speculations," says Addison in *The Spectator*, "is to banish vice and ignorance out of Great Britain." Addison and Steele did not attempt to improve manners and morals by nagging or scolding. They laughed at vice until it began to feel ashamed of itself. They led people to see the charm of virtue and good breeding. This they did by portraying fine types of Englishmen such as the country gentleman, Sir Roger de Coverley, and others like Captain Sentry, Will Wimble, and the Templar. Such types led directly to the novel of character, as developed by Richardson.



From a pen-and-ink sketch

FIG. 74. — The Spectator.

Addison, the gentle "spectator" of London life, shows his readers that it is possible to be decent without being dull, to be pious without being gloomy or intolerant, to be chivalrous without silly enthusiasm. He continues to win all hearts by his kindly humor, his restraint, his good manners. His conception of a gentleman has stood the test of time.

The Sir Roger de Coverley Papers. — It is not for his paper on Chevy Chase, "the favorite ballad of the common people of England," that Addison is remembered, but for his Roger de Coverley papers in *The Spectator*. There, on the tray beside the dainty porcelain cups, from which people of fashion in those days sipped their tea or chocolate, lay the welcome little sheet of sparkling wit or elegant criticism, adding zest to the morning meal and suggesting topics for evening gossip.

The first sketch of Sir Roger we owe to the pen of Steele, but it was Addison who portrayed him in sketch after sketch,

Who has not enjoyed the old gentleman, with his harmless little oddities of manner, simple as a child and gentle as a woman, kind to animals and to all people in trouble, full of good sense, respected and beloved by every one? We may laugh at his ways, and yet we prize Sir Roger as one of the most delightful friends that we meet in books worth reading.



FIG. 75. — Sir Roger de Coverley coming from Church.

Addison's Place in Literary History. — The Sir Roger de Coverley papers helped to uplift the ideals of the world, for Addison and Steele were imitated all over Europe. During the eighteenth century Germany alone produced more than 500 journals like *The Spectator*, some of them printing literal translations of Addison and Steele. There, as in England, the periodical essay led on to the novel of manners or novel of character. Addison ranks as one of the ablest essayists in English literary history. His humor is quiet and good-natured, always employed to leave the world better than he found it.

SIR RICHARD STEELE (1672–1729)

Richard Steele's birth-year was the same as that of Addison, his father's family being English and his mother's Irish. From Dublin he went to Charterhouse School, London, where his long friendship with Addison began. Both lads

were at Oxford together, but Steele, less prudent than his friend, tired of study and joined Ormonde's Guards in 1694.

His Dramas. — The plot of Steele's first comedy, *The Funeral* (1702), is most improbable, yet its fun made it a success. *The Tender Husband* (1703), a fair specimen of sentimental drama, was also successful, but *The Lying Lover* (1704) failed. Although Steele had a good income, he had no business sense, and his debts were a source of anxiety to himself and his friends. In 1722 appeared *The Conscious Lovers*, dedicated to the "gracious and amiable sovereign," George I. One of the characters in Fielding's *Joseph Andrews* says that "it contains some things almost solemn enough for a sermon."



FIG. 76. — Sir Richard Steele.

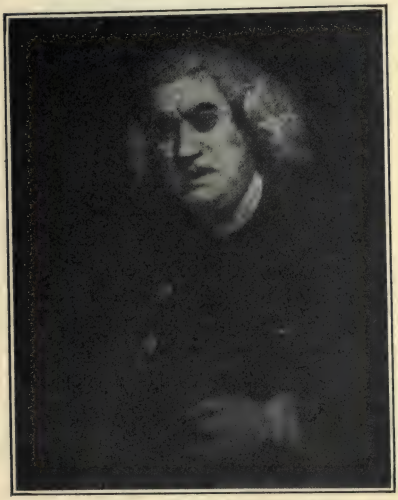
His Essays. — It was Steele who started *The Tatler* (1709), published three times a week. Of its 271 papers Steele wrote 188, Addison 42, and together they wrote 36. If Addison's essays in *The Tatler* and *The Spectator* are more polished, Steele's are more vigorous. If Addison gave immortality to Sir Roger de Coverley, Steele created him.

In 1715 George I knighted Steele, and the following year he was receiving an income of £1000 a year from the forfeited estates of Scottish gentlemen who had been involved in the

northern rebellion of 1715. In his forty-third year he died at Carmarthen, Wales, where he had gone to escape the annoyance of his creditors.

Samuel Johnson (1709–1784)

Boswell's Life of Johnson. — When James Boswell (1740–1795) was introduced to Samuel Johnson in 1763, the young Scotsman became a great admirer of the burly Englishman. Among Boswell's works none has attracted so much attention as his *Life of Johnson* (1730), the finest biography ever written in our language. Boswell's style is so natural and so intimate that he has given us a clearer conception of Johnson than some of us have of our next-door neighbors.



From the painting by Reynolds

Sam: Johnson

Fig. 77. — Samuel Johnson.

The year 1709 saw Johnson's birth at Lichfield. "Cultivate your mind, if you happen to have one," is the advice that he offers in one of his letters. In his nineteenth year he entered Oxford, but he did not possess money enough to stay until he received a degree. For a time he was a teacher, and then he was in the employment of a Birmingham book-seller. A private school which he had started was unsuccessful. In 1737 he

went to London, where he had a hard struggle for existence.

Beginning of Johnson's Literary Career. — In his twenty-ninth year Johnson wrote *London* in heroic couplets, wherein he deplores the neglect of literature by England's metropolis. In *The Vanity of Human Wishes* (1749) he tries to show from the career of men like Wolsey that earthly ambition is an idle dream. Both poems, based upon the satires of Juvenal, indicate that their author was not at all happy. The same dissatisfaction is brought out in his tale of *Rasselas* (1759). Johnson relates how Rasselas, Prince of Abyssinia, after travelling over the world, returns to his native valley, believing in the vanity of earthly pleasures. Nevertheless the manly character of the author is well brought out when, in *Rasselas*, he remarks that " Nothing will ever be attempted if all possible objections must be first overcome."

Johnson began to issue *The Rambler* (1750–1752) twice a week, and about six years later he started *The Idler*. The essays in these periodicals are seldom read, because they are written in the heavy Latinized style which Macaulay termed Johnsonese, that is, peculiar to Johnson. Boswell suggested that it was due to Johnson's admiration of Sir Thomas Browne, a writer of the Miltonic period.

The Dictionary. — A dictionary is a book that contains the words of a language with their meanings. Long ago when the English monks came to a word that might be misunderstood in any manuscript, especially Latin, they put its meaning at the side of the manuscript in easy Latin or English. A collection of such words was a glossary, so called because it contained a list of glosses or explanations.

Near the beginning of the eleventh century came the earliest Latin-English dictionaries. Dictionaries of French, Spanish, and Italian appeared early in the seventeenth century. About the same time came English dictionaries

with explanations in English for the use of " women and other unskilful persons." In 1721 was published Nathaniel Bailey's English dictionary, giving the derivation of the words. It was on this book that Johnson based his *Dictionary* (1755), in which are given quotations to illustrate the different uses of words.

Journey to the Western Isles. — In 1773, when Johnson was sixty-four years of age, he took a journey to Scotland, the literary outcome of which appears in his *Journey to the Western Isles of Scotland* (1775). In this book is the most eloquent passage that Johnson ever composed. He is describing the emotions raised in his mind on visiting the island of Iona.

> Whatever withdraws us from the power of our senses, whatever makes the past, the distant, or the future, predominate over the present, advances us in the dignity of thinking beings. Far from me and from my friends be such frigid philosophy as may conduct us indifferent and unmoved over any ground which has been dignified by wisdom, bravery, or virtue. That man is little to be envied whose patriotism would not gain force upon the plains of Marathon, or whose piety would not grow warmer among the ruins of Iona.

In 1781 Johnson wrote *Lives of the Poets*. The last literary work of his old age is entertaining in spite of its lack of sympathy with Milton and Gray. The language is simpler than in any of his earlier works, more like that of his conversations. Sometimes the anecdotes are racy, and often the criticism is keen.

Johnson's Place in Literary History. — In his seventy-fifth year Johnson was laid to rest in Westminster Abbey. He was most fortunate in his biographer, whose unique skill has won for Johnson many admirers. Fond of power, he was often too eager for victory to admit that he had made a mistake. Though at times uncouth in manner and ap-

pearance, he was really a kind-hearted man with unusual courage and endurance. Johnson is so human, so sane in the more important aspects of life, so typical of the age in which he lived, that he will always occupy a position of respect in English literary history.

Edmund Burke (1729–1797)

The Sublime and Beautiful. — Swift, Steele, and Edmund Burke were all born in Dublin, the last of them in 1729. After receiving his higher education at Trinity College, Dublin, Burke went to London in his twenty-first year and studied law.



From a pen-and-ink sketch



Fig. 78. — Edmund Burke.

His essay on *The Sublime and Beautiful* (1756) is a discussion of "the origin of our ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful." He considers that the sublime is that which arouses a sense of awe and terror, a theory that was applied in such sensational or so-called Gothic romances as Walpole's *Otranto*. Burke's essay, with its criticism of poetry and painting, influenced the famous Lessing of Germany.

Beginning of Burke's Political Career. — Burke's career as a statesman began in 1765, when he was admitted to Parliament as a member of the Whig party. Six years later

parliamentary debates began to be reported in the daily newspapers, and popular approval came speedily to those who were eloquent. The outcome was a display of oratory such as Britain had never known, among the orators being Fox, Pitt, and Burke.

Speech on Conciliation with America. — It was on March 22, 1775, that Burke, as a member of the minority or Opposition party, delivered in the House of Commons his famous *Speech on Conciliation with America*, sometimes known as the *Speech on Conciliation with the Colonies*.

The speech is divided into four parts: (1) the introduction; (2) why Britain should try to conciliate the Colonies — (*a*) their peculiar circumstances, (*b*) the uselessness of force, (*c*) the character of the Colonists; (3) what the British concession should be — giving the Colonists a direct interest in the British Constitution; (4) the conclusion, wherein Burke answers the possible objections to his speech in favor of compromise. At the very end he calls attention to the common interests of the British people in America (Colonists) and the British people in the old homeland.

The Revolution in France. — Among Burke's political writings is his *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (1790), in which he deplores the execution of Marie Antoinette, Queen of France. "The age of chivalry is gone," said the orator. Yes, the age of chivalry seems to have been gone two centuries earlier, for in 1587 Mary Stuart was beheaded, yet no swords "leaped from their scabbards."

2. *POETS*

Alexander Pope (1688–1744)

Earlier Years. — By the time he was twelve years of age Alexander Pope had some knowledge of Greek, Latin, and

English poetry. He had written verses for his own pleasure as well as a play that was performed by his schoolmates. Once the boy was cruelly flogged for writing some laughable lines about his schoolmaster.



From the painting by Richardson

A. Pope

FIG. 79. — Alexander Pope.

Pope's first important literary work was the *Essay on Criticism* (1711), a didactic or argumentative poem which was praised by *The Spectator*, and brought about an introduction to Addison and Swift, the latter of whom became his life-long friend. The poem lays down the rules that a poet ought to observe in his art, and it holds up the ancients and the French as models who follow Nature. Most of us are familiar with such pithy brilliant lines as —

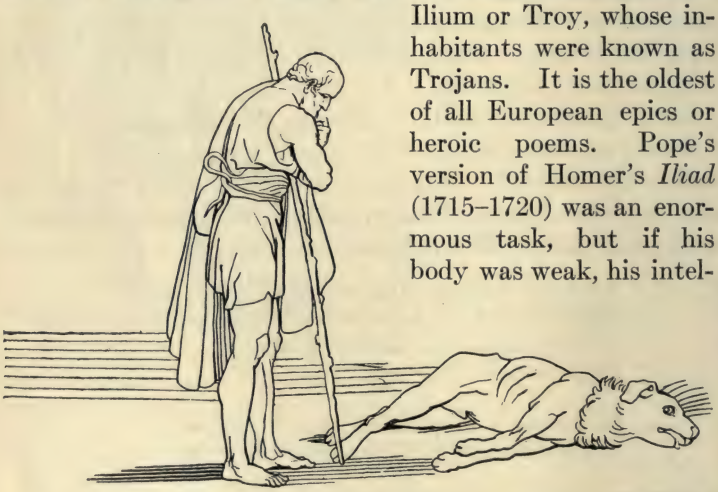
> Trust not yourself; but your defects to know,
> Make use of every friend — and every foe.
> A little learning is a dangerous thing;
> Drink deep. — 213.
>
> Be not the first by whom the new are tried,
> Nor yet the last to lay the old aside. — 335.
>
> True ease in writing comes from art, not chance,
> As those move easiest who have learned to dance. — 362.

The Rape of the Lock. — The first edition of *The Rape of the Lock* appeared in 1712, and beyond a doubt it is the cleverest mock epic that has ever been written. None of Pope's works is so original or so playful. Its saucy wit runs through the whole five cantos.

The young Lord Petre had cut a lock of hair from the head of Arabella Fermor, a maid of honor at the court of Queen Anne. This led to a coolness between the two families, and a Mr. Caryll suggested that Pope should try to bring peace by writing a poem that might soothe the feelings of the lady and her friends. Pope wrote *The Rape of the Lock*, a copy of which was sent to the lady, whom he calls Belinda.

> If to her share some female errors fall,
> Look on her face, and you'll forget them all. — Canto II, 17.

Homer's Iliad and Odyssey. — The *Iliad* is an ancient Greek poem dealing with the siege and capture of Ilium or Troy, whose inhabitants were known as Trojans. It is the oldest of all European epics or heroic poems. Pope's version of Homer's *Iliad* (1715–1720) was an enormous task, but if his body was weak, his intel-



After Flaxman

FIG. 80. — Ulysses gazing upon his Dying Dog.

lect was strong. If it is not a literal translation, at least it strives to convey the spirit of the *Iliad* in a manner adapted to the taste of the age. It is in the speeches of the heroes that the English poet achieves the highest results.

The earliest European romance in verse is the *Odyssey*. It is an epic of adventure whose hero is Odysseus or Ulysses, and the poem narrates his homeward voyage after the siege of Troy. The first part of Pope's version of the *Odyssey* appeared in 1725, a task in which he was aided by others. The English version of these two Greek poems brought Pope a handsome fortune.

The Dunciad. — In 1728 appeared the first edition of the *Dunciad*, a poem about persons whom the author regarded as dunces or blockheads. The author pretends that the throne of Dullness is vacant, and he suggests one after another of his literary enemies for the place of honor. Most of the persons held up to ridicule are now almost forgotten. The satire aroused so much feeling that for a time the poet carried a pistol and was accompanied by a dog which seemed to enjoy good health.

Essay on Man. — The last of Pope's more notable poems is the *Essay on Man* (1732–1734). Milton professed to write *Paradise Lost* in order to "justify the ways of God to man"; Pope in this poem proposes to "vindicate the ways of God to man." He seeks to show that this is the best possible world, even if man cannot understand some of its apparent blemishes. As Pope puts it —

> 'Tis but a part we see, and not a whole. — 60.

Or again —

> Hope springs eternal in the human breast:
> Man never is, but always to be blest. — 95.

Pope at Twickenham. — After the death of his father in 1717 Pope leased an estate at Twickenham in the suburbs

of London, and there he entertained many a celebrity. For a time he was friendly with one of his neighbors, Lady Mary Montagu. Next to his mother, who died in 1733, the woman whom he revered most was Martha Blount, whom he had known since childhood. In his will he left her most of his property, and he requested that he should be buried near his parents. His wishes were carried out in 1744.

Pope's Literary Position. — Pope is the prince of society poets; that is, he was mainly a town poet at a time when London demanded verse which reflected the ideas and customs of polite society. If he is less vigorous than Dryden, he is more graceful and polished. Shakespeare alone has coined more phrases that have passed into everyday speech. In the use of the heroic couplet Pope attained a perfection that made imitation hopeless, and thus indirectly and unconsciously he helped to bring about a change of fashion in poetic composition.

James Thomson (1700–1748)

In the sixth chapter we noticed that pastoral poetry professes to deal with shepherds or other people who live in the country. Spenser in his *Shepherd's Calendar* makes roses, daffodils, and primroses bloom at the same time, while Milton in his *Lycidas* has three kinds of berries at a time of the year when it would be difficult to find them. Accurate observation comes only to him whose heart is filled with a love of nature for its own sake.

Thomson's Seasons. — James Thomson received his higher education at the University of Edinburgh. When he rode southward to London, in his pocket was a blank-verse poem called *Winter* (1726), the first of the four parts of *The Seasons*. Instead of imitating the fashionable heroic couplets of Dryden and Pope, Thomson's theme goes back

to Spenser's *Shepherd's Calendar*, while the blank verse and the diction are akin to those of Milton.

The rest of the poem, the parts dealing with Spring, Summer, and Autumn, appeared between 1727 and 1730. The first suggestion of the poem may have come to him as an undergraduate in Edinburgh, when he was studying Virgil's *Georgics* (rural poems). It has the didactic manner of the classical period. *Autumn*, for instance, celebrates the river Tweed near whose banks the good-natured poet spent childhood's days. The *Seasons* exercised great influence in Britain, France, and Germany, as it was the outcome of a direct observation of nature.

Thomson's Plays. — Thomson's plays are now almost forgotten, the only one of consequence being the masque of *Alfred*, written with the help of his friend David Mallet. Its memory is preserved through the stanzas of *Rule Britannia*, which to this day remains one of the most spirited of national songs.

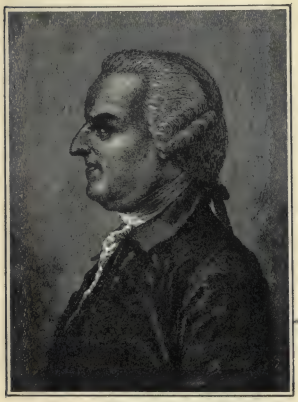
The Castle of Indolence. — In 1748 appeared *The Castle of Indolence*, an allegory written in the Spenserian stanza. As *The Seasons* displays the changeful beauty of the year, so this poem presents an atmosphere of dreamy repose, which soothes the fancy of those who long for leisure. As in Tennyson's *Lotos-Eaters*, the dwellers in the enchanted castle, which is in the land of Drowsyhead, lie steeped in easy luxury.

Thomson's sentiments are pure and elevating. Like Goldsmith he was careless about money, generous, unselfish, though rather indolent in his habits. Like Goldsmith, when the author of *The Seasons* died (1748), he had not an enemy in London.

Thomas Gray (1716–1771)

Another poet that avoided the heroic couplet was Thomas Gray. After going to school at Eton he went to Cambridge, where he displayed a love for the ancient classics. His first notable poem was the ode *On a Distant Prospect of Eton College* (1742), whose closing lines are familiar:

No more; where ignorance is bliss,
'Tis folly to be wise.



From a portrait by Grosch

Fig. 81. — Thomas Gray.

Gray's Elegy.—Gray resembled most of the chief writers of the classical period in being fond of moralizing, a taste which finds immortal expression in the *Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard* (Stoke Poges). The poet's classical taste was too pure to be content with anything but carefully polished verses. Written in 1750 in quatrains, that is, stanzas of four lines with alternate rimes, the noble sentiments of this poem are set forth in lines so perfect that they possess an undying charm. Its solemn stanzas roll out their muffled music like the deep tones of a cathedral bell, reaching and teaching many a heart in every land of civilization.

Welsh and Norse Themes. — Gray's *Letters* reveal the clear, elegant style of their author, and his later poems are mainly concerned with Old Welsh and Old Norse themes. *The Bard* (1757) is the most striking of the Welsh poems in English, while *The Fatal Sisters* and the *Descent of Odin* (1768) are the earliest specimens of Old Norse literature



FIG. 82. — Stoke Poges Churchyard.

in the form of English poetry. Most of Gray's work is classical, but here he has chosen romantic themes, and has treated them with imagination and feeling.

WILLIAM COLLINS (1721–1759)

William Collins was a man who understood the magic that lies in variety of cadence and in glimpses of hidden beauty. After leaving Oxford he deservedly gained renown by his odes (1746–1747). He wrote even less than Gray, and he wasted no words. In twelve lines his *How Sleep the Brave* (1746) contains more true poetry than some poems that are hundreds of lines in length.

How sleep the brave who sink to rest
By all their country's wishes blest!
When Spring, with dewy fingers cold,

Returns to deck their hallow'd mold,
She there shall dress a sweeter sod
Than Fancy's feet have ever trod.

By fairy hands their knell is rung,
By forms unseen their dirge is sung;
There Honour comes, a pilgrim grey,
To bless the turf that wraps their clay;
And Freedom shall awhile repair,
To dwell a weeping hermit there!

Collins's *Ode to Evening* is a sort of foretaste of the manner of Keats. Some of his work, like *The Passions,* possesses the classical characteristics of this period. It is in the ode *On the Highlands* that he alludes to Skye's lone isle and —

Pale red Culloden, where these hopes were drowned.

SUMMARY

1. The classical period of English literature means the half century or more during which most writers tried to write as they believed the ablest of the ancient Greeks and Romans had written. The English authors aimed at simplicity, elegance, and common sense.

2. Journalism now began to shape public opinion as well as literature, the first of the great English journalists being Defoe, whose *Robinson Crusoe* is the most interesting story of its kind ever written.

3. The most energetic prose writer of his time was Dean Swift. He and Pope were the chief writers of the Tory (now Conservative) party. No one needs to be coaxed to read Swift's *Gulliver's Travels,* a satire in the form of allegory.

4. The two leading essayists at that time were Addison and Steele, both of whom, like Defoe and Burke, were Whigs (now Liberals). They created Sir Roger de Coverley in *The Spectator.*

5. Boswell's *Life of Johnson* has no equal in English literature. Johnson's *Lives of the Poets* contains some good anecdotes and some good criticism.

6. Burke tried to show the British House of Commons why it would be prudent to retain the American Colonies by good will rather than by compulsion. His noble *Speech on Conciliation with the Colonies* failed to change the policy of the government.

7. The most brilliant poet of the early eighteenth century was Pope, whose didactic poems and satires contain many familiar passages. *The Rape of the Lock* is good-natured and witty.

8. Keen observation of nature marks Thomson's *Seasons*.

9. Gray's *Elegy*, a favorite even in foreign countries, needs no praise.

10. Some of Collins's odes are highly poetic; that is, they please by their beauty. Both Gray and Collins at times show a taste for the unusual or romantic.

Test Questions

1. Suggest one or more causes that may have led to the classical period in English literary history.

2. Explain the following words or phrases: Grub Street, Dissenter, Picaresque (*not* picturesque), Drapier, Iliad and Odyssey, Dunciad, Georgics, Quatrains.

3. Read at least a part of *Robinson Crusoe*, and in your own way give your opinion of its style and argument. What induced Defoe to think of such a story?

4. Name any one of Swift's works, and tell what you know about its contents.

5. Compare the style of Addison and Steele, and point out the part played by each in portraying Sir Roger de Coverley. How did *The Spectator* influence society and literature?

6. What do you know about dictionaries prior to 1755? Distinguish between Jonson and Johnson.

7. What caused oratory to become popular during the eighteenth

century? Suppose one of your friends has written for information about Burke's *Conciliation with the Colonies*. Answer in the form of a letter.

8. Can you suggest any reason for the friendship of Swift and Pope? Quote one or more passages from Pope's didactic poems. In what respect does Pope's work resemble (*a*) Shakespeare's, and (*b*) Milton's?

9. Distinguish between the verse or metre of Pope and Thomson. Compare Thomson's *Castle of Indolence* with Tennyson's *Lotos-Eaters*.

10. State the name of the churchyard to which Gray's *Elegy* alludes, and write a paraphrase of the poem, giving your own impressions. What kind of verse gave Collins his literary reputation?

ADDITIONAL AUTHORS WITH CHIEF WORKS

Prose Writers. — John Arbuthnot (1667–1735), *History of John Bull;* George Berkeley (1685–1753), *The Minute Philosopher;* David Hume (1711–1776), *Essays;* William Robertson (1721–1793), *History of Charles V;* Adam Smith of Kirkcaldy (1723–1790), *Wealth of Nations;* Thomas Warton (1728–1790), *History of English Poetry.*

Poets. — Matthew Prior (1664–1721), *Social Verses;* Isaac Watts (1673–1748), *Hymns;* John Gay (1685–1732), *Fables* and *The Beggar's Opera;* Allan Ramsay of Leadhills (1686–1758), *The Gentle Shepherd*, the last British pastoral of merit, the humor and naturalness of which influenced Burns and even Wordsworth; Robert Blair (1699–1746), *The Grave;* Edward Young (1683–1765), *Night Thoughts;* Charles Wesley (1708–1788), *Hymns;* Mark Akenside (1721–1770), *Pleasures of the Imagination;* John Home (1722–1808), *Douglas*, a tragedy in blank verse, founded on the ballad of *Gil Morice.*

SUPPLEMENTARY READING

a. For Classes

All the classics of this period are published in inexpensive editions by firms such as Macmillan, Allyn and Bacon, Appleton, Scribner's, Longmans, Houghton Mifflin, John Lane, Oxford Press, Cassell, American Book Co., Ginn, Heath, Sanborn, Silver Burdett, Putnam's, Dutton, Crowell. The foregoing series vary in type, binding, etc., and the prices range from $.10 to $.60.

exploit takes place in Denmark. After the Norman Conquest (1066) romances of chivalry became popular in England, the most important of which are concerned with King Arthur. These are based upon legends, some of which may be older than the story of Beowulf. Among such stories of Arthur is Malory's *Morte d'Arthur*, the most notable prose romance of the fifteenth century.

Later English Narratives. — Pastoral romances such as Sidney's *Arcadia* (1590) are nothing more than slight modifications of the older romances of chivalry. Greene the dramatist wrote not only romances or "love pamphlets," but narratives of low life in Shakespearean London. His *Life of Ned Browne* (1592), written in the first person, is not unlike the picaresque or rogue stories of Defoe. When every hero, as in heroic romance, is endowed with courtly manners, character-drawing becomes more difficult, even with the aid of no little real wit. Heroic romance such as Mackenzie's *Aretina* (1661) gave way to tales of adventure like *Robinson Crusoe* (1719) and romances of roguery like Defoe's *Captain Singleton* (1720).

The final contribution to the development of the novel in England came through the work of Addison and Steele. In the sketches of Sir Roger de Coverley, for example, we have a criticism of manners, a more accurate portrayal of human character than any earlier writers attempt. People enjoyed these sketches, and they demanded more of them. This led to the novel of real life, the novel of manners, which is the most important literary achievement of the eighteenth century.

What is a Romance? — Romance is so called because at first it was simply a narrative translated from Old French, that is, from a Romance language or a language based upon that of the ancient Romans. Romance appeals to our love of surprise, to our love of what is unusual or unknown. In its worst form a romance is fantastic and improbable; in its

best form it has a vision of the ideal, a vision of the big dream that haunts and cheers us in our noblest moods.

What is a Novel? — The modern novel, as we might expect, came into existence during a matter-of-fact period, when prose was greater than poetry. The *novella* of Italy, whose people are natural story-tellers, gives us the term novel. The original *novella* was a simple short story, concerned mainly with a single incident.

A novel is distinguished from a romance by its closer adherence to real life and manners. It tries to base its plot, incidents, and characters upon what might have readily occurred in ordinary society. It appeals to emotion rather than to fancy, and it is more democratic than the earlier romance. At its worst it depresses the reader or tends to make him have a low opinion of mankind; at its best it is a helpful study in character, in the power of each person for good or for evil.

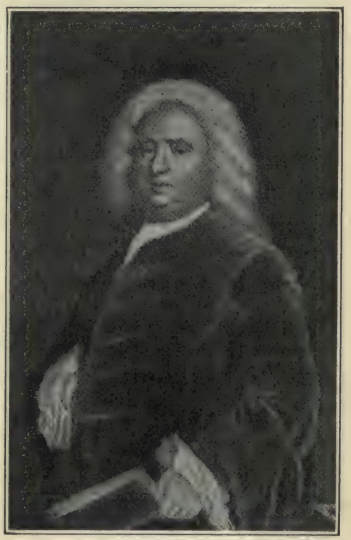
Some specimens of prose fiction contain the best elements of both the romance and the novel. These are not likely to perish quickly because they reveal interest in personality, sympathy with mankind, a confidence that men and women are capable of rising to better things.

The Aims of Prose Fiction. — The aims of prose fiction, as stated by those who have written it, may be summed up thus: (1) to give pleasure to the reader; (2) to win his confidence by an appearance of truth or sincerity; (3) to touch his emotions; (4) to appeal to his reason; (5) to show him life as it is, as it was, as it will be, or as it ought to be.

Samuel Richardson (1689–1761)

Letter-writing. — The cheap mail service of the nineteenth century, encouraging a vast system of correspondence, altered the character of letter-writing. Two centuries ago,

for the first time in the history of English literature, prose became distinctly superior to poetry, and one of the forms of prose composition is letter-writing. So seldom, however, were social letters written during the eighteenth century that people often preserved their friends' letters, which sometimes were really too good to be burned. Of course, the best letters are those that have the ease and geniality of conversations with intimate friends. Among the correspondents that achieved distinction were Lady Mary Montagu (1689–1762), Lord Chesterfield (1694–1773), and the poet Gray.



From the painting by Highmore

S. Richardson

FIG. 83. — Samuel Richardson.

It was in boyhood that Samuel Richardson laid the foundation of his literary renown. Born in Derbyshire in the same year as Lady Montagu, young Richardson, a pupil in the village school, used to write love-letters for maidservants and others who had no skill with pen and ink. He became a successful London printer as well as a writer of novels in the form of letters.

The Novels. — Richardson was over fifty years of age when he wrote *Pamela* (1741), the first European novel in the modern sense of the term. Pamela Andrews, the heroine, is a maidservant who is no simpleton. She is annoyed by her employer's son, but finally he marries her and becomes an

ideal husband. The ladies went into raptures over this book, and five editions were sold within a year.

Richardson's second letter-novel was *Clarissa Harlowe* (1748) in seven volumes. Clarissa is a young woman of good family and of noble character. Her parents wish her to be married to a man for whom she has no affection. Lovelace, a brilliant witty scoundrel, gains her confidence, but she loses her faith in him as soon as she discovers his real character. She refuses his offers of marriage and dies in London lonely and broken-hearted. This is considered to be Richardson's masterpiece.

The longest of this author's works is *Sir Charles Grandison* (1753), named after one who is supposed to be an ideal gentleman. Lady Montagu declared that Richardson in this novel knew nothing about the society which he attempted to describe. Certainly Sir Charles's letters must have tried the patience of Miss Byron if she had really attempted to read them.

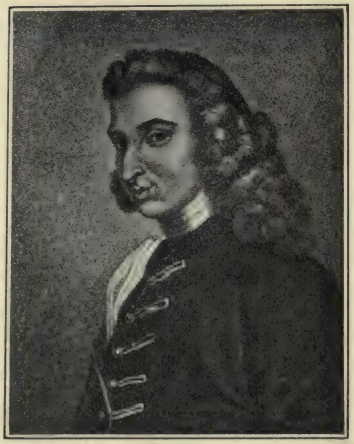
Richardson's Position in Literary History. — Richardson discovered that people were interested in their own feelings. His sentimental novels pleased people of his own time by depicting life as it is and life as he thought it should be. Few people read his works to-day, because he uses too many words and is therefore tedious. However, he shows insight into human motives, and his works exercised considerable influence upon the writers of France and Germany.

Henry Fielding (1707–1754)

Playwriter and Journalist. — Among those who jeered and laughed heartily at the first appearance of Richardson's *Pamela* was Fielding, a witty lawyer of thirty-three, whose birthplace was Somerset. Henry Fielding was educated at Eton and at the University of Leyden in Holland. When

he began his career in London, he became a playwriter and a journalist. Though his comedies and farces are now mostly forgotten, he learned how to give unity to his plots, a lesson which proved of great use when he became a novelist.

Novelist. — His first novel was *Joseph Andrews* (1742), which he began as a caricature of *Pamela*. Fielding, however, soon forgot his mockery of Richardson, and the novel developed into a humorous picture of certain phases of life in the eighteenth century.



From the engraving by Cazenave, after Reynolds

FIG. 84. — Henry Fielding.

The next novel was *Jonathan Wild* (1743), which contains veiled satire against Sir Robert Walpole, at that time the British Prime Minister. If this story of a thief is the weakest, *Tom Jones* (1749), which its author regarded as an epic in prose, is the strongest of his novels. It mocks at the sentimentalism of Richardson, and is noted for its plot construction and its vivid portraits.

In *Amelia* (1751), the last of his novels, Fielding alludes to the conditions of prison life. It is the story of a woman married to a weakling named Captain Booth. Three years later Fielding, who had fallen into ill health, went to Portugal, and died at Lisbon in 1754.

Fielding's Literary Position. — Like Steele the Irishman and Thomson the Scotsman, Fielding was rather careless about money matters, witty, and good-natured. Fielding surpasses all the novelists of the eighteenth century in

his ability to construct a plot, although his work is marred by occasional vulgarity. In manliness, in sincerity, in knowledge of the world, Fielding is distinctly superior to his predecessor in prose fiction.

Laurence Sterne (1713–1768)

Among English men of letters are three clergymen — Robert Herrick (1591–1674), Dean Swift (1667–1745), and Laurence Sterne — all of whom might have been more successful in some other profession. It is difficult to classify Sterne, for his stories have little or no definite plot, and yet they are specimens of prose fiction.

Laurence Sterne had Clonmel in Ireland as his birthplace, his father's regiment being stationed there in the year 1713. Laurence's early years were spent in the barracks, and his surroundings left their impress upon the boy's responsive nature. In his twentieth year he went to the University of Cambridge, and five years later he was a clergyman. It was because of his clerical duties at York that he called himself Mr. Yorick.

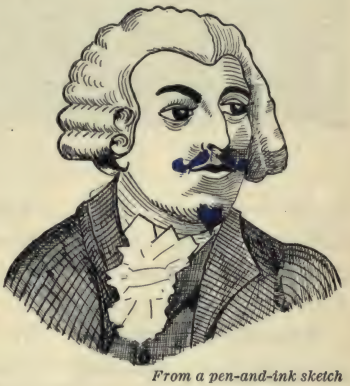
Chief Works. — The first volume of *Tristram Shandy* (1759) made its author popular. The work as a whole is lacking in coherence. Though much of the material is borrowed from French and English writers, it bears the stamp of Sterne's personality. Here and there are vulgarities, but the skill in creating characters is undeniable. Uncle Toby, who was probably not unlike Sterne's father, and Corporal Trim, are two familiar characters in English fiction.

Sterne's *Sentimental Journey* (1768) came out shortly before the death of its author. Based upon travels through France and Italy, it contains graceful pictures of continental scenes and manners. Public taste has changed, so that in spite of no little humor and pathos Sterne's works are seldom read.

Horace Walpole (1717–1797)

After his childhood days in London, Walpole, who was an accomplished letter-writer, and the poet Gray met at Eton and were student friends at Cambridge. They travelled together in Europe, and then Walpole entered Parliament. In 1764 he published *The Castle of Otranto.* Since the story professes to be based upon a dream, naturally it is odd and fanciful. The author supposes that he is in a Gothic castle, and "on the uppermost bannister of a great staircase I saw a gigantic hand in armour." For his own amusement he exaggerated the wonder and the mystery of the old stories of chivalry, producing what is called a Gothic — that is, unclassical — romance.

The volume contains a choice collection of horrors — haunted chambers, rooms with trapdoors, bleeding statues, and so forth. The supernatural events are relieved by the introduction of the castle servants, who are both natural and entertaining.



From a pen-and-ink sketch

Fig. 85. — Tobias Smollett.

Tobias Smollett (1721–1771)

Smollett does what no literary man in Britain had done before, and few have accomplished since. He creates seamen that are alive, men whose speech and manners cannot be mistaken for those of a landsman. Real deep-sea sailors are rare in the world's literature, because most writers have not spent years upon the deck of a

vessel, an experience without which no man may hope to understand the charm, the waywardness, the mystery of the salt water far from any shore.

Tobias Smollett, who was born near Bonhill in Dumbartonshire, was a student at the University of Glasgow, and then acquired a knowledge of surgery. In 1739 he went to London,



FIG. 86. — University of Glasgow.

became surgeon's mate in a man-of-war, saw service against the Spaniards in Central America, left the navy, and found a wife on the island of Jamaica. Thereafter he returned to London.

The Five Novels. — The spirited style of Smollett is noticeable in *Roderick Random* (1748), the first novel of the sea in English literary history. It is written from actual observation of men and manners. Its description of the hardships of naval life is so vivid that it aroused the public and led to reforms in the naval service.

Smollett's other stories are *Peregrine Pickle* (1751),

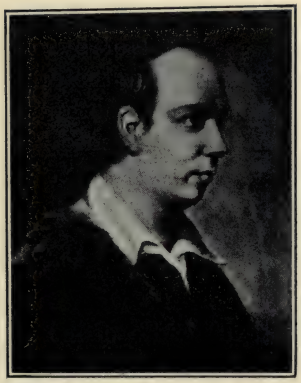
Ferdinand Count Fathom (1753), *Sir Launcelot Greaves* (1762), and *Humphrey Clinker* (1771), his masterpiece. In the last of his works he deals with neither rogues nor fools. It is a narrative in letters so amusing that it places Smollett among the greatest humorists of the eighteenth century. Thackeray declared that it is the most laughable story which has ever been written.

The Closing Years. — In 1755, after an absence of sixteen years, Smollett visited his native land, talked of bygone days with former playmates, and once more felt the arms of his aged mother around him. Then he hastened southward to his desk in London. Toil and suffering had softened him so that the tenderness underneath his proud impetuous nature rose to the surface. Concerning the loss of his only daughter in 1763 he said little and thought much. Eight years later in a cottage by the sea he faced life's finish with courage and even with grim humor. He rests where the waters of the Mediterranean croon their gentle chant by night over the old English cemetery at Leghorn in Italy.

Smollett's Literary Position. — Smollett had unusual versatility, even if he is inferior to both Richardson and Fielding in working out a plan or plot for his stories. It is not as a journalist or as a writer of verse, plays, history, and criticism, but as a creator of sea-scenes and picaresque or rogue stories that he is remembered. In portraying seamen like Trunnion in *Peregrine Pickle*, Smollett has scarcely a rival. Like Fielding he allowed occasional vulgarities to deface some of his pages, and yet his odd amusing characters influenced Sterne and Scott, and especially Dickens. Like most pioneers Smollett has been eclipsed in many respects by his successors.

Oliver Goldsmith (1728–1774)

What has drawn the crowd of Irishmen to the dim light at the street corner? To an old familiar tune a man is singing a new street-ballad. On the outskirts of the crowd is a round-faced lad of nineteen, one of the students at Trinity College, Dublin. To-night he is listening to the hawker who sings as he sells copies of his broadside ballads, each for a penny. No one, except the publisher, knows that the lad who is listening to the ballads is their author, and that his name is Oliver Goldsmith.



From the painting by Reynolds, National Portrait Gallery

Oliver Goldsmith

Fig. 87. — Oliver Goldsmith.

Goldsmith came into the world at Pallas, County Longford, Ireland. The school at Athlone was among those that the boy attended before he went to Trinity College, where he received his bachelor's degree in 1749. Three years later he was a student of medicine at the University of Edinburgh, after which he went to the continent. For a year Goldsmith travelled over Europe, at times playing his flute in the evenings for a meal and a bed.

Returning to London in 1756, he acted for a short time as a teacher, and was a proofreader in the printing office of Richardson the novelist. Like Smollett, Goldsmith tried to become a surgeon's mate in the navy, but without avail. For Smollett's periodical, *The British Magazine*, he wrote reviews and memoirs. When he met Johnson in 1761, the two men became close friends.

As a Poet. — In 1764 appeared *The Traveller*, a poem which brought renown to Goldsmith by reason of its choice diction and graceful style. It is a descriptive poem in heroic couplets, whose object is to show that contentment depends upon our view of life rather than upon our circumstances. It is



FIG. 88. — Trinity College, Dublin.

mainly based upon the poet's travels. This seems to be the first English poem that contains some of the musical place-names of America, in such allusions as —

> Where wild Oswego spreads her swamps around,
> And Niagara stuns with thundering sound. — 411–412.

One of the best-known poems in the English language is *The Deserted Village* (1770). Its object is to show that country life is better than city life, that agriculture is superior to commerce in bringing individual and national happiness.

The melody of its rhythm, the tenderness of its emotion, and the delicacy of its humor have preserved the original fragrance. The village, which Goldsmith calls Auburn, is really the Irish village of Lissoy, where the poet spent some of his childhood years.

> There, in his noisy mansion skilled to rule,
> The village master taught his little school;
> A man severe he was, and stern to view;
> I knew him well, and every truant knew.
> Well had the boding tremblers learned to trace
> The day's disasters in his morning's face;
> Full well they laughed with counterfeited glee
> At all his jokes, for many a joke had he;
> Full well the busy whisper, circling round,
> Conveyed the dismal tidings when he frowned;
> Yet he was kind; or, if severe in aught,
> The love he bore to learning was in fault;
> The village all declared how much he knew. — 195.

As a Novelist. — It is neither as an essayist nor as a poet that Goldsmith finds a place in the present chapter, but as the author of *The Vicar of Wakefield* (1766), a work which influenced the literature of Europe. It is a story of the trials of a country clergyman's family, and shows how by his faith and goodness the Vicar, Dr. Primrose, finally rises above every misfortune. It is the first domestic novel in English literature. The plot may be rather improbable, yet the good-natured humor, the pictures of rural life, and the character-drawing are singularly attractive.

As a Playwright. — Goldsmith's humor is seen to excellent advantage in *The Good-Natured Man* (1768), a comedy which contains the fine character-sketches of Croaker and Lofty. It is by his second comedy that Goldsmith's dramatic talent is best known. *She Stoops to Conquer* (1773), which appeared the year before its author's death, is still as popular as it was in the eighteenth century.

Tony Lumpkin is one of the favorites of theatre-goers. The play is one of the merriest and most natural comedies of the British stage.

Goldsmith as Man and Author. — Goldsmith was far from faultless, and yet he is one of the most lovable characters in English literature. Too generous for his own comfort, he gave and forgave with a kindliness that is remarkable. Good sense, sympathy with the unfortunate, a keen conception of humor, are among the characteristics of his work. His writings are really worth reading because they touch the heart and help to make life sweeter. Many writers are more profound, but in sincerity and naturalness he ranks high among writers of verse as well as prose.

SUMMARY

1. Primitive tribes have prose fiction in the form of unwritten myths, while barbaric tribes have unwritten fables and fairy tales.
2. One of the earliest stories on record in England is *Beowulf*, named after its Swedish hero.
3. The novel of contemporary manners is the chief literary product of the eighteenth century.
4. Richardson's letter-novels begin with *Pamela*, a novel whose central theme is the subtle insistent power of womanhood in society.
5. In planning a plot that works out naturally, Fielding surpasses all early novelists. His *Tom Jones* mocks at Richardson's sentimentalism.
6. Sterne's two prose works are made up of a series of incidents that do not work out naturally, the one from the other. In other words, Sterne is weak in plot construction.
7. The first novel of the supernatural is Walpole's *Castle of Otranto*.

8. The first novel of the sea is Smollett's *Roderick Random.*

9. The first domestic novel is Goldsmith's *Vicar of Wakefield.*

Test Questions

1. Distinguish between a romance and a novel, stating how the names arose.
2. What are the chief aims of prose fiction?
3. Write a letter wherein you explain how the modern novel came into existence. What induced Richardson to write letter-novels?
4. In what way did Fielding learn the desirability of having a well-constructed plot? Name one character in any of his novels.
5. Write a short essay on any one of the works of a writer born in Ireland. Who was Mr. Yorick?
6. Tell what you know about any novel that was supposed to be the outcome of a dream.
7. Why are seafaring characters rare in prose fiction?
8. Quote any passage that you have memorized from Goldsmith. In what way is any of Goldsmith's work related to America?
9. Who was the Vicar of Wakefield? Read one of the chapters in *The Vicar of Wakefield,* and write a paraphrase of it in your best style.

SUPPLEMENTARY READING

a. For Classes

Inexpensive editions of *The Vicar of Wakefield* and other English classics have been published by the Macmillan Co., Merrill Co., and other firms mentioned near the close of the previous chapter.

b. For Teachers and Others

Biographies of most of the authors mentioned in the present chapter are in the English Men of Letters series (Macmillan), $.40, and Great Writers series (Scribner's), $1.00. The following works are also recommended:

R. Burton, *Masters of the English Novel,* N. Y. (Holt), $1.25.

F. W. Chandler, *The Literature of Roguery,* 2 vols., Bost. (Houghton), $3.00. A splendid study of picaresque stories.

W. L. Cross, *The Development of the English Novel,* N. Y. (Macmillan), $1.50.

W. L. Cross, *Life and Times of Laurence Sterne*, N. Y. (Macmillan), $2.50.

C. H. Herford, *English Tales in Verse*, N. Y. (Scribner's), $1.00.

J. J. Jusserand, *The English Novel in the Time of Shakespeare*, N. Y. (Putnam's), $3.50.

A. S. Mackenzie, *The Evolution of Literature*, N. Y. (Crowell), $2.50.

Brander Matthews, *The Historical Novel and Other Essays*, N. Y. (Scribner's), $1.25.

Bliss Perry, *Study of Prose Fiction*, Bost. (Houghton), $1.25.

W. Raleigh, *The English Novel*, N. Y. (Scribner's), $1.25.

Samuel Richardson, *Pamela*, N. Y. (Dutton), $1.00. Other novels at the same price.

G. Saintsbury, *The English Novel*, N. Y. (Dutton), $1.50.

W. E. Simonds, *Introduction to English Fiction*, Bost. (Heath), $.80.

Laurence Sterne, *A Sentimental Journey*, Phila. (Lippincott), $1.00.

F. H. Stoddard, *Evolution of the English Novel*, N. Y. (Macmillan), $1.50.

S. L. Whitcomb, *The Study of a Novel*, Bost. (Heath), $1.25.

CHAPTER XIII

THE ROMANTIC PERIOD

1760–1837

THE romantic period of English literature may, for the sake of convenience, be said to extend from the beginning of the reign of George III to the accession of Queen Victoria. It was a period of revolt, as shown in the American Revolution (1775), the French Revolution (1789), the mutinies in the British navy (1797), the Irish rebellion (1798), and the industrial revolution brought about by mechanical inventions as well as by improvements in agriculture.

Some Features of the Period. — Taste in literature was becoming different from what it had been during the classical period, and this was only one of the signs of a gradual change in social ideals, a change that affected America as well as Europe. New buildings in England began to show a change in style of architecture. Gainsborough was simply one of several artists whose portrait painting and landscape painting, glorified by the beauty of truth, still command the world's admiration. Wood-engraving attained the highest distinction through the brothers Bewick. Art of all kinds, foreign as well as native, attracted greater public attention.

The war with France and Spain (1779), as well as with Holland (1780), not to speak of conflict at the same time with the colonies in America, naturally made the British people more serious and tended to broaden their sympathies. A sense of pity for men and women of another race led to a growing murmur against the African slave trade, as reflected

for instance, in several of Cowper's poems (1788). A sense of pity for unfortunate prisoners, many of whom were debtors rather than criminals, led John Howard (1773) to call the attention of Parliament to conditions in London and elsewhere. A sense of pity for the children of the poor, some of whom toiled in factories without restriction of the hours of labor, induced Robert Raikes (1780) to institute Sunday schools, where in many cases the children learned to read and write, and were helped toward greater comfort and happiness. This same interest in the children appears in the poetry of Blake, Wordsworth, and others. A keener interest in animals is also a sign of the extension of sympathy. With color as well as form true to nature, the painter Morland depicted cattle that seem to be alive, and Cowper and Burns wrote poems upon themes such as the dying spaniel and the aged horse. These men were not ashamed to show that feeling which has never really been absent from the human heart.

Title of the Chapter. — The romantic period, as this chapter is entitled, is so called because most of the eminent writers at this time appeal less to reason than to imagination. Their work is suggestive of those aspects of life that busy people are tempted to neglect. They believe that facts in themselves have little or no value, except so far as they enhance the beauty and the dignity and the striving of human life.

What is romantic is really as old as human imagination. Imagination is the power of seeing under the surface of things, the power of detecting the beauty that is hidden in what looks commonplace. Imagination is the mother of romance, and neither the mother nor the daughter has ever been far distant, even if we fail to behold them.

As reason dominates the classical period, so imagination is the strongest element in the modern romantic period. So far as the writers of this period have vision or a sense of the ideal, they are truly romantic. So far as they are gro-

tesque or vague, so far as they permit emotion to cloud rather than to strengthen imagination, they are neither romantic nor classical, but simply inefficient.

Why was there a Romantic Period? — The romantic period appears to have come because (1) people enjoy a change, (2) political upheavals in America and Europe aroused a spirit of unrest, (3) the satire of the previous period could no longer restrain the expression of natural feeling, (4) travelling facilities as well as improvements in agriculture caused a stronger interest in other countries and in rural life, and thus quickened the imagination.

During the first fourteen years of this period 452 acts were passed in England for repairing the public highways. People travelled more than ever throughout the British Isles as well as abroad, and this helped to make the world look bigger, to arouse greater curiosity in nature's charms, to call more attention to bygone days, and to give better opportunity for the distribution of good books. For the first time circulating libraries were established in the larger towns, and thus authors had to appeal to a new circle of readers.

1. *POETS*

Percy's Reliques. — Increasing reverence for the past is seen in the popularity of the *Reliques of Ancient Poetry* (1765), published by Thomas Percy (1729–1811), who later became Bishop of Dromore in Ireland. The volume contains a collection of 176 English and Scots popular songs and ballads, only 45 of which are in the old folio manuscript, a document which Percy declined to publish. The *Reliques* convinced many people of the importance of saving the old folk-poetry before it perished. Later Scott collected border ballads, and much interest in folk-song was aroused, especially among the Germans.

William Cowper (1731–1800)

His Mother's Picture. — The mother first saw her son at Great Berkhamstead. Her hand it was that tenderly guided his childhood. More than fifty years after the day on which the child of six saw a dark hearse bearing his mother's form from the door, an elderly man bent over a picture and gazed with moist eyes upon the image of one whom no true man can forget. In English poetry are no lines more touching than those *On the Receipt of my Mother's Picture* (1790):



After the engraving by Fillman

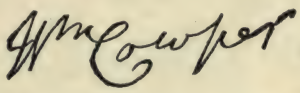


Fig. 89. — William Cowper.

My mother! when I learnt that thou wast dead,
Say, wast thou conscious of the tears I shed?
Hovered thy spirit o'er thy sorrowing son,
Wretch even then, life's journey just begun?
Perhaps thou gavest me, though unfelt, a kiss:
Perhaps a tear, if souls can weep in bliss —
Ah, that maternal smile! It answers — Yes.
I heard the bell tolled on thy burial day,
I saw the hearse that bore thee slow away,
And turning from my nursery window, drew
A long long sigh, and wept a last adieu!
But was it such? — It was. — Where thou art gone,
Adieus and farewells are a sound unknown.

The Shadow of his Life. — At a boarding-school the motherless boy was nagged and beaten by an older lad, cruel because thoughtless. At eighteen Cowper entered an attorney's office. Shy and timid, the lad worried over an approaching examination and became insane. After a time he recovered, but he was at times haunted by the fear that his soul would be lost. In 1760 he resided with the Unwins, a most sympathetic family.

Narrative Poems. — Among the more notable of Cowper's many narrative poems are *Boadicea* (1780), the impressive story of a warrior queen of ancient Britain; *Alexander Selkirk* (1782), dealing with the Scottish seaman who is the hero of *Robinson Crusoe; The Loss of the Royal George* (1782), an account of a big man-of-war that went down with all her crew; *John Gilpin* (1782), a merry poem relating how a worthy London citizen on horseback celebrated the anniversary of his wedding day; and *The Castaway* (1799), telling in vivid lines about an English sailor washed overboard and drowned in the Atlantic.



From a pen-and-ink sketch

FIG. 90. — John Gilpin.

Other Poems. — Cowper's noted *Olney Hymns* (1779) is a work that is justly admired. His translation, in blank verse, of *Homer* (1791) is more literal than Pope's, but it is less spirited. Benjamin Franklin praised Cowper's moral satires, the most readable of which is *Retirement* (1782).

It was *The Task* (1785) that made the poet a celebrity. Its title is due to the fact that Lady Austen suggested the theme of the first of its six books; namely, The Sofa. The purpose of the poem is to exalt country life over city life, as in the well-known line —

> God made the country, and man made the town. — Bk. I, 749.

Other familiar lines are —

> Variety's the very spice of life,
> That gives it all its flavour. — Bk. II, 606–607.

And —

> Knowledge is proud that he has learned so much;
> Wisdom is humble that he knows no more. — Bk. VI, 96–97.

And —

> I would not enter on my list of friends
> (Tho' graced with polish'd manners and fine sense,
> Yet wanting sensibility) the man
> Who needlessly sets foot upon a worm. — Bk. VI, 560–563.

Cowper's Literary Position. — The author of the *Olney Hymns* ranks among the best of English letter-writers. His minute observation and description of nature, his portraits of even the humblest persons, his sincerity of spirit, stamp Cowper as a most worthy forerunner of Wordsworth. Like Addison in some of his essays, and Thomson in his poems, Cowper had romantic leanings, but he can scarcely be termed a romantic poet.

James Macpherson (1736–1796)

Ossian's Address to the Sun. — Ossian, like Milton, is supposed to have been blind in his old age, and this is part of his Address to the Sun, taken from *Carthon:*

> The oaks of the mountains fall; the mountains themselves decay with years; the moon herself is lost in heaven, but thou art for ever the same, rejoicing in the brightness of thy course. When the world is dark with tempests, when thunder rolls and lightning flies, thou lookest in thy beauty from the clouds, and laughest at the storm. But to Ossian thou lookest in vain, for he beholds thy beams no more; *whether thy yellow hair flows on the eastern clouds, or thou tremblest at the gates of the west.* But thou art perhaps like me for a season; thy years will have an end. Thou shalt sleep in thy clouds careless of the voice of the morning. Exult then, O sun, in the strength of thy youth!

The man who penned this passage was James Macpherson, a native of Kingussie in Scotland. We can scarcely ignore a writer whose work influenced Byron and other poets. More than once he was praised by Gray as well as by Matthew Arnold, one of the chief critics of the Victorian period.

The Poems of Ossian. — Macpherson asserted that twenty-two of his poems were translations from the Gaelic language employed by Ossian, son of Fingal, supposed to be a bard of the third century A.D. Only eleven of the twenty-two poems have appeared in Gaelic.

It has been urged that Macpherson wrote original compositions instead of translations, but it is evidently impossible to decide a question of this sort without a knowledge of Gaelic. Modern Gaelic scholars agree that the oldest texts of Ossianic literature in Scotland are in manuscripts written from the fifteenth to the seventeenth century. It is also maintained that some of the Gaelic-speaking people of Scotland still recite Ossianic ballads and prose stories, handed down from father to son by word of mouth.

Macpherson's Literary Position. — No writings ever caused a greater sensation in Europe, and none perhaps contributed more to the development of the romantic movement in Germany and the surrounding countries. Schiller's earlier dramas fell under the influence of Macpherson's work, and Schubert set portions of the poems to music. The nobility of sentiment, the melancholy tenderness, the bold imagery based upon an appreciation of untamed nature, are often impressive.

Fragments of Ancient Poetry (1760), *Fingal* (1762), and *Temora* (1763) may not be translations, but neither is Walpole's *Castle of Otranto,* even if its author declared it was a translation from Italian. Percy added some of his own work to the *Reliques,* yet neither Walpole nor Percy has been denounced as an impostor. The history of European

poetry and prose fiction affords many examples of a similar character even as late as the nineteenth century. If Macpherson had not been insulted so frequently, he might have told the exact facts, but his pride was hurt, and he kept silent.

A recent critic complains that the language is always vague, yet Macpherson writes —

> She came in all her beauty, like the moon from the cloud of the east. Loveliness was around her as light. Her steps were like the music of songs. She saw the youth and loved him.

Thomas Chatterton (1752–1770)

The story of literary martyrdom belongs to the dim background of the world's history. Many a seeker for fame in the sphere of letters has sacrificed health, eyesight, or even life in attempting to serve mankind. Milton and Scott are familiar instances, but what a company slumber in nameless graves. In the whole history of English literature there is perhaps no more pathetic figure than Thomas Chatterton, the boy whose life was crushed by neglect.



From a pen-and-ink sketch

Fig. 91. — Thomas Chatterton.

The Child's Manuscripts. — Under the shadow of the old church of St. Mary Redcliffe at Bristol, Chatterton passed his childhood. The authorities broke open the chests which contained the records of the church, and old parchments were left unlocked as though they were rubbish. Chatter-

ton's father, a schoolmaster, a few weeks before his son was born, had taken some of the manuscripts to his home. At the age of six Thomas became interested in the old illuminated manuscripts and began to read at an age when some children scarcely know the letters of the alphabet. Four years later the boy with the brilliant gray eyes was writing verses, and by the time he was eleven he had in fancy a number of good friends, among whom was Thomas Rowley, a poetic priest of the fifteenth century. With infinite patience this child was already writing verses in the name and style of his imaginary friend Rowley. This was all harmless enough.

Chatterton in London. — In 1768 the lad of sixteen tried to secure a publisher for *Rowley's Ancient Poems*, including *Ælla*, a dramatic interlude. Next year he sent Walpole his Rowley or Rowlie poems, but the poet Gray told Walpole that they were not really ancient. This fact should not have made the slightest difference, since Walpole himself four years earlier had pretended that his own *Castle of Otranto* was a translation. From the time of Greek romance in the third century down to Defoe and Swift, similar harmless pretences had probably imposed upon no one, even though they were intended to lend an air of dignity to the composition.

At all events Walpole did nothing to secure a position for the sensitive boy, who had explained his youth and his humble circumstances. He paid no attention to several letters from Chatterton, although in 1769 he finally sent back the boy's manuscripts. The man of fashion dismissed the whole matter from his mind until next year Goldsmith told him that the boy, not yet eighteen, had committed suicide one night in August.

Chatterton's Literary Position. — Although despised mainly because he was so young, yet the genius of Chatterton may in a measure have influenced Keats and Rossetti, two of the principal romantic poets of the nineteenth century.

If we take into account his youth, Chatterton displayed no little poetic resourcefulness. He sometimes produced lyrics with considerable feeling. To some extent he is under the influence of Pope, yet his metres are more varied and independent. *A Hymn for Christmas Day*, written in Chatterton's eleventh year, has seven stanzas, one of which runs thus:

> How shall we celebrate the day,
> When God appeared in mortal clay,
> The mark of worldly scorn:
> When the archangel's heavenly lays
> Attempted the Redeemer's praise,
> And hailed salvation's morn!

William Blake (1757–1827)

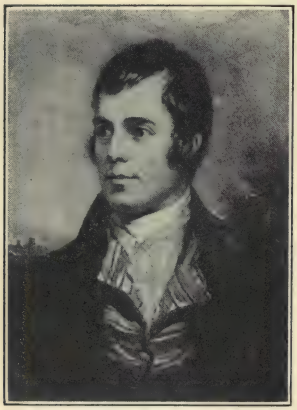
Among those who were to some extent affected by the work of Chatterton was William Blake, strangest of all English poets. From his early childhood in London he was fond of drawing. He became an engraver by day and a poet by night. In his twenty-sixth year appeared *Poetical Sketches*. About 1800 Blake began to be so absorbed in his own ideas that he came to believe that his fancies were realities. In other words, he was a mystic. He thought that he could speak to such men as Moses and Dante and Milton, and that some of these spirits sat to him for their portraits. In 1809 he exhibited some of his pictures, but most people did not understand him or his work.

His Works. — Blake's reputation in the world of letters rests almost entirely on *Songs of Innocence* (1789) and on *Songs of Experience* (1794). As the titles indicate, the former is the simpler. It was published along with Blake's own illustrations in harmonious color. There are twenty short lyrics in the volume. The few lines on the *Little Lamb* have some dramatic suggestiveness.

In *Songs of Experience* Blake is sometimes so plain that a child may understand; at other times he has puzzled readers, as Shakespeare did in *The Phœnix and the Turtle*. In this collection *The Tiger* is the most familiar. Some of the poems on children and animals have been admired. Blake's work is very unequal, sometimes obscure, and nearly always quaint.

Robert Burns (1759–1796)

But human bodies are sic fools,
For a' their colleges and schools,
That when nae real ills perplex them,
They make enow themselves to vex them.



From the painting by Nasmyth, National Portrait Gallery

Robert Burns

Fig. 92. — Robert Burns.

These lines from *The Twa Dogs* were written by a poet called Burns. Recently a new fact was discovered by a student. "On the 25th of January 1759, Robert Burns was born in a cottage of stone, which he helped his father to face with clay instead of mortar." If we omit the allusion to Robert's aid, the statement is accurate. The cottage was in Alloway parish, two miles south of the seaport of Ayr. The father was the type of man depicted in *The Cotter's Saturday Night* (1786). The mother's name was Agnes Brown, her mother being a Davidson of Clan Chattan in the North. It was from his father that Robert derived his black curly hair and powerful intellect,

and from his mother he inherited his fine dark eyes and his taste for poetry.

From the age of six the boy attended various schools at intervals. Much of his education, however, came from his parents. Before Robert was sixteen, he had written his first verses. In 1783, the year before his father's death, the young poet and his brother Gilbert leased the farm of Moss-



FIG. 93. — Birthplace of Burns.

giel. Soon afterward Robert met Jean Armour, whom he later married.

In 1786 Burns resolved to emigrate to America, and published some of his poems at Kilmarnock in order to pay for the voyage. The poems were very successful, and Dr. Blacklock, himself a writer of verse, encouraged Burns to come to Edinburgh. On the back of a pony he rode eastward to the city, where he was welcomed by people of all classes. Soon the second edition of his poems brought him about twenty-five hundred dollars, nearly half of which he gave

to help his mother and the rest of the family. By this time the poet was content to stay in his native land.

In 1788 Burns brought his wife to Ellisland in the county of Dumfries, and he employed four servants to help on the farm. Still retaining the farm, the poet became an officer of excise or district inspector of goods liable to a tax. From 1791 until his death, five years later, his home was in the town of Dumfries, where he now rests in St. Michael's churchyard.

The Poems. — There was no classical period for Tam o' Shanter (Tam of the Shanter farm) and other farmers of Ayrshire or anywhere else. Burns had observed nature more keenly than most poets, because for years he made his living behind the plough. The horses and sheep and cattle were less his property than they were his friends. It was from the heart that he wrote poems about his *Auld Mare* or *Poor Mailie* (a name he gave to a pet sheep).

One reason why Burns is so well known in America and other countries is that his characters belong to all classes of society, as may be seen in poems ranging from *The Jolly Beggars* (1785) to *The Earl of Glencairn* (1791), with its pathetic lines:

> The bridegroom may forget the bride,
> Was made his wedded wife yestreen;
> The monarch may forget the crown
> That on his head an hour has been;
> The mother may forget the child
> That smiles sae sweetly on her knee;
> But I'll remember thee Glencairn,
> And a' that thou hast done for me!

Shakespeare was an Englishman and Burns a Scotsman, but we care little about the land of their birth, because each makes a universal appeal to men and women as human beings.

Burns had a profound regard for true religion, yet he had little patience with what he conceived to be hypocrisy or intolerance. In *A Winter Night* he confesses:

> But deep this truth impressed my mind
> Through all His works abroad,
> The heart benevolent and kind
> The most resembles God.

The Songs. — No poet ever wrote so many songs that have been sung for generations. Many an ancient melody did he preserve by wedding the music to his own impassioned diction. Often he played the melody on his violin, as he composed the words to fit the tune. In the songs of Burns the bitter-sweet pains of love are poured in a torrent which, for lyric vigor and variety, is perhaps unequalled. He describes the shy admiration of *Mary Morison,* the playfulness of *Comin' through the Rye,* the irony of *Let not Woman e'er Complain,* the pastoral charm of *Afton Water,* the pathos of *Highland Mary,* the tragic note of *Bonnie Doon,* and the spirituality of *Mary in Heaven.* What simple sincere chivalry breathes from *O Wert Thou in the Cauld Blast:*

> Or were I in the wildest waste,
> Sae black and bare, sae black and bare,
> The desert were a paradise,
> If thou wert there, if thou wert there.
> Or were I monarch o' the globe,
> Wi' thee to reign, wi' thee to reign,
> The brightest jewel in my crown
> Wad be my queen, wad be my queen.

Burns reveals love in all its phases. What tenderness underlies that song of wedded love, *John Anderson, my Jo* (sweetheart)! His lyric genius, however, had other aspects. Witness the self-respect of *A Man's a Man,* the birthday song *Rantin Robin,* the humorous *Duncan Gray,* the patriotism of

Scots Wha Hae, the romantic daring of *Macpherson's Farewell*, and the parting chorus of friendship, *Auld Lang Syne*.

The Soul of Genius. — With perfect frankness Burns explained, so far as he was able, under what circumstances many of his poems and songs came into existence. Of course, no man of genius can set down in detail the influences that guide him in his work. He does not know them himself, for his soul is vibrating to a myriad delicate harmonies, unconscious and therefore unuttered. The time comes, however, when some sudden emotion, some strong wave of sentiment, sweeps over him, and then ideas that were working without his knowledge take definite shape. The imagination is kindled, the brain throbs with the passion of creativeness, the words come quickly and in melodious fitness to clothe the thought, and a true poem is begotten.



From a photograph

FIG. 94. — Highland Mary's Grave.

The Romance of Highland Mary. — From the same impulse sprang three beautiful songs, the earliest of which is *To Mary* (1786), written in the very year that Burns intended to go abroad.

O sweet grows the lime and the orange
And the apple on the pine;
But a' the charms o' the Indies
Can never equal thine.

Mary Campbell (in Scotland the *b* is not silent) was about to return to her West Highland home for a while, and the

lovers agreed to meet on the second Sunday of May on the banks of the river Ayr. Burns gave Mary a Bible as a keepsake, and they said good-by for the last time. Five months later she died at the port of Greenock on the river Clyde, a town that gave birth to the alleged pirate Captain Kidd as well as to James Watt, whose name will always be linked with the steam-engine. Mary sleeps in the West Kirkyard, an upright slab at the head of the mound.



FIG. 95. — Highland Mary.

For several days the girl had been in her grave before Burns learned that she had been ill. The shock of her sudden death cut him most keenly, and his two other songs have given Highland Mary a sacred place beside Dante's Beatrice and Petrarch's Laura. Three years later, on the anniversary of her death, the poet composed *To Mary in Heaven* (1789), in whose opening stanza is revealed a rare idealism or spirituality.

Thou ling'ring star, with less'ning ray,
That lov'st to greet the early morn,
Again thou usher'st in the day
My Mary from my soul was torn.
O Mary! dear departed shade!
Where is thy place of blissful rest?
See'st thou thy lover lowly laid?
Hear'st thou the groans that rend his breast?

Again, three years later — notice the sacred number; three songs at intervals of three years — Burns composed *Highland Mary*, whose passionate word-music, sung to an ancient Gaelic melody, has more than once brought tears to the eyes of strong men. This is one of its four stanzas:

O pale, pale now, those rosy lips,
I aft hae kiss'd sae fondly!
And closed for aye the sparkling glance
That dwelt on me sae kindly!
And mould'ring now in silent dust,
That heart that lo'ed me dearly!
But still within my bosom's core
Shall live my Highland Mary.

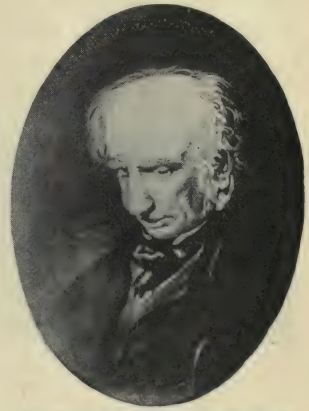
Burns's Literary Position. — Burns was the greatest realistic poet of the eighteenth century; that is to say, he depicts the real life of his own time, tinged with romance. He represents the daring open-handed Scotsman. In the young farmer of Ayrshire the lyric genius of his countrymen found its fullest and strongest, its sweetest and tenderest, expression. Lovingly he fingered the Book of Nature, entranced he pored over the Book of Romance, but in the Book of Life — of human passion — he wrote with his own heart's blood. This is why his words are on the lips of the world, when writers with much greater opportunities are neglected and forgotten.

William Wordsworth (1770–1850)

Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Southey are often termed the Lake Poets, because these friends lived chiefly near the beautiful lakes of Cumberland in northwestern England. Northern English scenery is at its best in late spring and in early autumn. The woods are sprouting into green or the green is melting into russet and gold, and we see lakeland at its loveliest. It will welcome us cordially, and may suggest

that sense of joy which awoke more than a century ago in the heart of William Wordsworth.

In 1770 Wordsworth was born at Cockermouth, Cumberland. In his seventeenth year he entered the University of Cambridge, and three years later he visited France and Switzerland. On a second visit to France in 1791 he expressed sympathy with the French revolutionists. Like Burke, he changed his views when the queen and others were beheaded.



After Lupton's engraving of Hayden's portrait

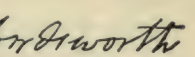


FIG. 96. — William Wordsworth.

Wordsworth resembled Milton and Tennyson in at least one respect. He considered the composition of poetry to be his chief business, and by good fortune he was never obliged to toil hard for daily bread. He was in his twenty-third year when he published *An Evening Walk* and *Descriptive Sketches,* both in heroic couplets. In 1798 came the *Lyrical Ballads,* which included *The Ancient Mariner* of his friend Coleridge. It was in Germany (1798–1799) that he wrote *Lucy Gray* and one or two less familiar poems.

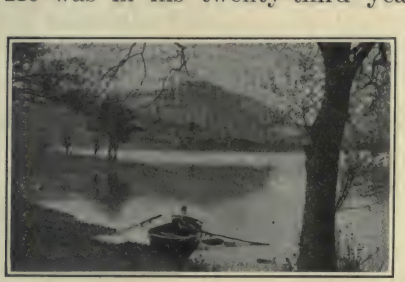


FIG. 97. — Grasmere Lake from Dove Cottage.

On returning to England Wordsworth settled with his sister Dorothy at Dove Cottage, Grasmere, among the hills

of his childhood. There in 1802 he married Mary Hutchinson, and six years later they removed to Allen Bank. Finally in 1813 he went to Rydal Mount, which is within view of Lake Windermere, under the shadow of the Cumberland Mountains. He became poet laureate in 1843, a position which he held until he died in his eightieth year, when Tennyson became his successor. Wordsworth sleeps at Grasmere by the side of his daughter Dora.



FIG. 98. — Rydal Mount.

His Theory of Poetry. — From the preface to the *Lyrical Ballads* it is evident that Coleridge was to deal with themes of legend and romance in such a way as to make them look real, whereas Wordsworth was to treat incidents from common life with such imaginative power as to give them the charm of romance. Wordsworth's idea, suggested apparently by the success of Burns, was that great poetry can be written about simple subjects in a simple manner, but he carried his theory so far that sometimes his verse is uninspired. One of his most brilliant successes in making a simple theme truly romantic is *The Solitary Reaper* (1803). The opening stanza runs thus:

> Behold her, single in the field,
> Yon solitary Highland Lass!
> Reaping and singing by herself;
> Stop here, or gently pass!
> Alone she cuts and binds the grain,
> And sings a melancholy strain;
> O listen! for the Vale profound
> Is overflowing with the sound.

No nightingale did ever chaunt
More welcome notes to weary bands
Of travellers in some shady haunt,
Among Arabian sands:
A voice so thrilling ne'er was heard
In spring-time from the Cuckoo-bird,
Breaking the silence of the seas
Among the farthest Hebrides.

His Theory of Nature. — Wordsworth had the idea that Nature is alive, although she seems dead to those who have neither the eyes to see nor the ears to hear. Nature he loves, from the mighty mountain to the puny primrose. This love unites him with Nature, so that he responds to all her moods and her messages, and in various ways these messages lead to Him who is divine. For instance, *The Prelude* (1850), a long poem in blank verse, was intended to introduce a longer unfinished poem termed *The Recluse*, of which the second part is the didactic poem known as *The Excursion* (1814). The theme of the last-named poem is — How can a person who is downcast regain trust in God as well as in man? Part of the answer is —

The smoke ascends
To Heaven as lightly from the cottage-hearth
As from the haughtiest palace. He, whose soul
Ponders this true equality, may walk
The fields of earth with gratitude and hope. — Bk. IX, 245–249.

Poems of Childhood. — Emerson, the great American thinker, praised Wordsworth's *Ode to Dion*. Of the tragic fate of an ancient Greek it treats in choicest language, yet it is scarcely known as compared with the ode *On the Intimations of Immortality* (1807), one of many fine poems concerning the charm and mystery of childhood. All of us have followed the parents of *Lucy Gray* (1800) —

Then downwards from the steep hill's edge
They tracked the footsteps small.

In earlier years we have read *We are Seven* and *She Dwelt among the Untrodden Ways* (1803). We have watched *The Pet Lamb* (1800), when —

> The dew was falling fast, the stars began to blink.

Wordsworth's Literary Position. — As a writer of sonnets Wordsworth may be compared with Milton. He is a master of blank verse, and is one of the most thoughtful of all the poets. If he has written too much, he is not alone in this respect, nor is he alone in his lack of either wit or humor. Some of his best work is distinctly romantic in character. In his manner of expressing reverence for nature as well as human nature, he is more like Cowper than Burns. Wordsworth's aim was to teach us to be wise; he has done so — in teaching us to be happy.



Fig. 99. — Samuel Taylor Coleridge.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772–1834)

Wordsworth was a prattling two-year-old infant when Samuel Taylor Coleridge was born at Ottery St. Mary in Devonshire. Like most children he enjoyed fairy tales, and was taught by his father on clear evenings to watch the chief stars. At Christ's Hospital school in London he began his friendship with Charles Lamb, the essayist. In his nineteenth year Coleridge went to Cambridge, and then enlisted in the 15th Light Dragoons. In about

four months some of his friends found him and secured his discharge.

Longing for America. — On account of the French Revolution (1789–1793) the ideas of liberty, equality, and fraternity were everywhere. With his friend Southey, whom he met in 1794, Coleridge was working out a dream by no means new in the world's history. These young gentlemen proposed to sail across the Atlantic to the banks of the Susquehanna in Pennsylvania, and there they were to establish a Pantisocracy, that is, a colony in which all are equal. The proceeds of their labor were to go into a common treasury, a system which is usually called communism. Their leisure hours were to be devoted to literature. Without money, however, they could not visit America.

The Ancient Mariner. — In 1795 Coleridge married Sarah Fricker at Bristol, and Southey married her sister. Next year the Coleridges went to a cottage at Stowey in Somersetshire, their residence for about three years. These were the happiest years of the poet's life, and part of its outcome was that romantic masterpiece *The Ancient Mariner* (1789), published along with the *Lyrical Ballads* of Wordsworth, whom he had met the year before. Coleridge's familiar poem is mainly in the quaint style and metre of the old popular ballads. For instance —

> He went like one that hath been stunned,
> And is of sense forlorn;
> A sadder and a wiser man,
> He rose the morrow morn.

The tale is supposed to be told to a spell-bound wedding guest by an old sailor, who possesses a gray beard, glittering eyes, and long brown skinny hands. His ship is driven by storms southward into the Antarctic seas, where it is frozen fast. One day there comes an albatross, a bird supposed by

sailors to bring good luck, the ice breaks, and the bird follows the vessel. The sailor thoughtlessly shoots the albatross, and the vessel sails northward into the Pacific Ocean where it becomes becalmed in the sweltering tropics. A phantom ship draws near, showing Death and a Woman (Life-in-Death) gambling with dice for the souls of the sailor and his comrades. The Woman secures the Ancient Mariner; all the rest are seized by Death. After seven days and seven nights the sight of water-snakes fills his heart with love for God's creatures once more. Angel spirits trim the sails. Although there is no wind, the ship sails on till the mariner's native land appears. A pilot comes from the shore, but before he reaches the ship, it sinks and the sailor is saved by the pilot. Now the sailor is so unnerved, by what he has suffered on account of his cruelty to the albatross, that he goes from one land to another, and feels bound to confess his wrong.

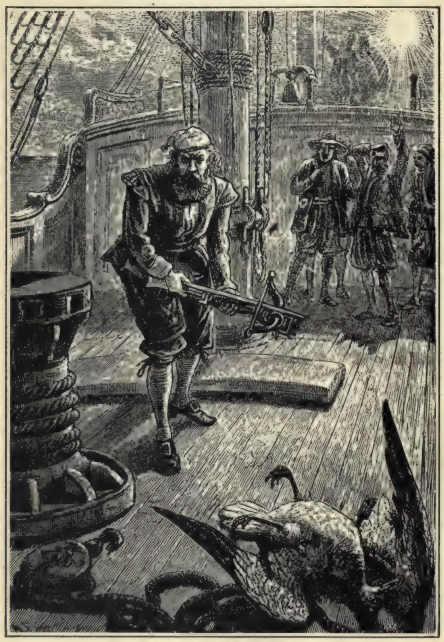


FIG. 100. — "I shot the Albatross."

The poem shows that (1) cruelty is punished, and (2) we ought to love all God's creatures.

Other Poems. — Among the more notable of Coleridge's other poems are *Kubla Khan* (1797), an unfinished Oriental poem suggested to him by a dream; *Christabel* (1797–1800), another supernatural fragment; and *Dejection* (1822–1832), an ode wherein he expresses disbelief in Wordsworth's theory of nature. The well-known *Hymn before Sunrise* is based upon the work of a German poetess, who seems to have been influenced by Macpherson's Ossianic poems.

> Motionless torrents! silent cataracts!
> Who made you glorious as the Gates of Heaven
> Beneath the keen full moon?

German Influence. — Even as far back as the Shakespearean period Germany had exerted a certain influence upon English literature. The genius of Germany includes a capacity for noble sentiment and profound thought, and this genius began to affect the whole of western Europe from the time of Lessing onward. Long before Coleridge died in his sixty-second year he came under this helpful influence.

1. In 1798 he visited Germany and studied its literature and philosophy. After his return to England in 1800 he produced a spirited translation of Schiller's drama *Wallenstein*.

2. In his "Gothic" tragedy *Osorio* or *Remorse* (acted, 1813) Coleridge borrowed to some extent from Schiller.

3. By his *Lectures on Shakespeare* (1808, 1812, 1818) Coleridge enriched literary criticism. He states in the literary essays called *Biographia Literaria* (1817) that both England and Germany are indebted to Lessing for helping them to a better appreciation of Shakespeare.

4. In *Aids to Reflection* (1825) Coleridge shows that he owes much to Kant and other German thinkers.

Coleridge's Literary Position. — Good as is his prose, it is mainly as a romantic poet that Coleridge holds his place

in English literature. At its best his poetry has a vividness of imagination unknown in Britain since Milton. In the quality of his imaginative power he most resembles Spenser — dreamy, melodious, subtle in thought. As a poet of the supernatural, Coleridge has a kinship with Blake. Apart from a certain melancholy tenderness there is scarcely enough human passion in his work to make him, like Burns, a poet of the people. On the other hand, rarely has there existed an imagination combining so much originality and daring with so delicate a sense of beauty.

Robert Southey (1774–1843)

Like Chatterton, Robert Southey was born in Bristol. After attending Westminster school he entered Oxford in 1792, where he met Coleridge. Twelve years later he went to reside at Keswick in the Lake district. Coleridge was already there, and Wordsworth was at Rydal Mount, fourteen miles distant. Southey wrote many works in verse and in prose, and was much more energetic than either Wordsworth or Coleridge. Necessity compelled him to toil to support his own family, and generosity impelled him to assist the family of his friend Coleridge. In 1813 when Scott declined the honor, Southey became poet laureate. Death came in 1843, his later years, like those of Swift, being clouded by mental trouble.



Fig. 101. — Robert Southey.

As a Poet. — Southey wrote narrative poems as well as lyrics. *Joan of Arc* (1796) shows sympathy with the re-

publican ideas of France. *Thalaba* (1801) depicts the perils and ultimate success of an Arabian hero. *Madoc* (1805) treats of a legendary Welsh prince who discovered America. *The Curse of Kehama* (1810) tells of the troubles of a young Hindu, cursed or bound with an evil spell by his own father. *Don Roderick* (1814), the last of Southey's romantic epics, narrates the loss of the hero's throne.

Some of the shorter compositions are among the best-known poems in the language. Nearly all young people have read and enjoyed *The Battle of Blenheim* (1798) and *The Inchcape Rock*. The latter of these, in ballad style, describes how a pirate met his fate on a sunken reef in the North Sea. To-day the reef is guarded by the Bell Rock Lighthouse.

As a Prose Writer. — Southey's *Life of Nelson* is his prose masterpiece, a biography worthy to rank with Scott's *Dryden* and *Swift*, Lockhart's *Scott*, and Carlyle's *Cromwell*. It is clear, polished, and sympathetic. His *History of Brazil* and other works are not nearly so well known as the *Nelson*, and yet Southey's best prose is not without distinction.

Thomas Campbell (1777–1844)

Thomas Campbell was a native of Glasgow. At the University of Glasgow he distinguished himself by his verse translations from the Greek poets. The first work that brought him public attention was *Pleasures of Hope* (1799), which contains the familiar line —

'Tis distance lends enchantment to the view.

Three years later appeared *Ye Mariners of England*, perhaps the most stirring of all English naval songs. At the same time came *Lochiel's Warning*. It tells how in 1745 Cameron of Lochiel, grandfather of the Lochiel men-

tioned in the third canto of Byron's *Childe Harold*, was warned that "Coming events cast their shadows before." Many of these poems are forceful, terse, and touched with sincere feeling.

In 1809 Campbell published *Gertrude of Wyoming*, whose closing picture of the death of the heroine is ennobled by



FIG. 102. — Loch Gyle. Scene of *Lord Ullin's Daughter*.

true pathos. In the same volume were other poems. Written in ballad style is *Lord Ullin's Daughter*, telling of the lady's tragic elopement with the chief of Ulva. No less vigor runs through *The Battle of the Baltic*, whose war notes sink into repose —

> While the billow mournful rolls,
> And the mermaid's song condoles,
> Singing glory to the souls
> Of the brave.

One of the most remarkable poems is *The Last Man*, in which we see a man ages hence, when the sun is growing

dim. Alone, gazing out upon the hummocks of ice and the wastes of snow, he is an inspiring figure, manly and resolute. Campbell died at Boulogne, France, in 1844, and was interred in Westminster Abbey.



After portrait by Sir M. A. Shee

FIG. 103. — Thomas Moore.

THOMAS MOORE (1779–1852)

Most people regard Thomas Moore as the representative poet of Ireland, but the Irish themselves are inclined to prefer James Clarence Mangan (1803–1849), the brilliant author of *Dark Rosaleen* and many other impassioned poems. Moore, whose birthplace was Dublin, seems to have inherited his talent from his mother. After studying at Trinity College, Dublin, he went to London.

Among Moore's Irish friends was Robert Emmett, who became involved in a national revolt in 1803. It was in Emmett's honor that Moore wrote these touching lines:

> Oh, breathe not his name! let it sleep in the shade,
> Where cold and unhonoured his relics are laid;
> Sad, silent, and dark be the tears that we shed,
> As the night-dew that falls on the grass o'er his head.
>
> But the night-dew that falls, though in silence it weeps,
> Shall brighten with verdure the grave where he sleeps;
> And the tear that we shed, though in secret it rolls,
> Shall long keep his memory green in our souls.

Moore's fame rests principally on his *Irish Melodies* (1807 and later), mainly a collection of songs of love and

patriotism, some of which are wedded to old Irish airs. Among the songs most familiar are *Tara's Halls, The Meeting of the Waters,* and *The Last Rose of Summer.* Wealth of fancy and gracefulness of sentiment distinguish the best of the lyrics.

In 1817 appeared *Lalla Rookh,* a series of Oriental stories in verse. These romances possess the vivacity of their author, and they proved almost as popular as Byron's Turkish tales in verse. Moore's greatest success in prose was achieved by editing the *Life and Letters of Lord Byron* (1830). The poet's wit and pleasing manners as well as his undoubted talent won for him many friends.

George Noel Gordon, Lord Byron (1788–1824)

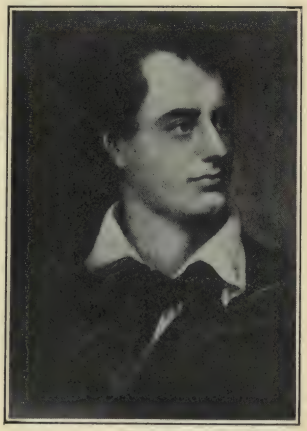
Toward the close of the fourth canto of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* are these lines:

> Roll on, thou deep and dark blue Ocean — roll!
> Ten thousand fleets sweep over thee in vain;
> Man marks the earth with ruin — his control
> Stops with the shore; upon the watery plain
> The wrecks are all thy deed, nor doth remain
> A shadow of man's ravage, save his own,
> When, for a moment, like a drop of rain,
> He sinks into thy depths with bubbling groan,
> Without a grave, unknell'd, uncoffin'd, and unknown. — clxxix.

In his rolling measures with their majesty and their music, the author of the *Odyssey* was able to echo the sound of the ocean and reflect some phases of its glory. Few poets since the days of Homer have sung the praises of the sea, and perhaps none has been able to capture and express its evasive charm better than Byron. His highly-strung temperament, his passion for swimming, his inborn unrest, his proud spirit, his life-long revolt against certain men and their opinions,

all qualified him to show us the witchery of the waves in lines that may prove imperishable.

Hours of Idleness. — About two years of the infancy of George Noel Gordon Byron were passed in London. Then to Gight in Aberdeenshire the mother, whose maiden name was Catherine Gordon, took her little gray-eyed child, who became strong and handsome in spite of his lameness. Her fortune had been squandered by the husband who abandoned her shortly after George's birth, an experience that was not apt to sweeten her temper. In his tenth year the boy became Lord Byron, and with his mother he went southward to Newstead Abbey near Nottingham.



From portrait by Kramer

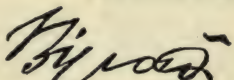


FIG. 104. — George Noel Gordon, Lord Byron.

In 1805 the lad began his studies at Cambridge, and two years later he published *Hours of Idleness*. In this collection of his early poems are the well-known song *Loch na Garr* and *Oscar of Alva*, the outcome of the poet's appreciation of Macpherson's *Ossian*. In 1808 the *Edinburgh Review* attacked the young poet rather severely, but next year he had his revenge when he issued the sarcastic *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*.

Childe Harold. — Shortly after publishing his satire, Byron began his travels in Greece, Turkey, and other European countries. When he returned to England he brought out the first two cantos or divisions of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, composed in Spenserian stanzas. Byron remarks,

"I awoke one morning and found myself famous." The third canto was written near Geneva in Switzerland (1816), while the fourth and last canto was composed in Venice (1817).

In the first canto the poet sets forth the pilgrim's impressions of Portugal and Spain, in which at this time the British were aiding the Spaniards to deliver their country from Napoleon. In the second canto the pilgrim visits Greece and its islands, in the course of which he gives his impressions of their past and their future. In the third canto the pilgrim, who is really Byron himself, gives a description of Waterloo and the dance at Brussels on the eve of the battle, and then he tells of Lake Geneva and the noted men who have resided in its neighborhood. In the fourth canto are pictures of Italy's chief cities, such as Venice, Florence, and Rome, including the famous incident of the Dying Gladiator, already mentioned in the opening chapter of this volume. Childe Harold then bids the reader farewell. The term Childe is an old word for a young man who, as in the romances of chivalry, is preparing himself to secure the honors of knighthood.

The long war against Napoleon had aroused public curiosity in European life and scenery. Byron's romantic and brilliant descriptions, therefore, became popular. There is no little pathos in the ninth stanza of Canto IV, if we remember that Byron died in his thirty-sixth year in Greece, a land which he was gallantly helping toward national independence. Speaking of his native country which he was never to see again, the poet says:

> Perhaps I loved it well; and should I lay
> My ashes in a soil which is not mine,
> My spirit shall resume it.

The Last Years in England. — Besides the first and second cantos of *Childe Harold,* Byron wrote in England a series of

metrical romances such as *The Corsair* (1814) or Pirate. Scott had made romantic narrative verse very fashionable, and Byron followed his style of versification.

> And the sheen of their spears was like stars on the sea,
> When the blue wave rolls nightly on deep Galilee.

Every one recognizes these lines from *The Destruction of Sennacherib*, one of the best of Byron's *Hebrew Melodies* (1815). This collection of short poems, dealing with incidents from the Bible, seems to have been written about the time of the poet's marriage. In 1816 came the crisis in his life. His wife, whose maiden name was Anne Isabella Milbanke, left him after a year of married life, and the public censured Byron so severely that he left England never to return.

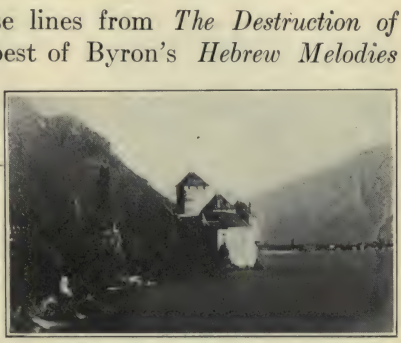


Fig. 105. — Castle of Chillon.



Fig. 106. — Dungeon of Castle of Chillon.

The Prisoner of Chillon. — Besides the long unequal poem, *Don Juan* (1819–1823), Byron composed the well-known *Prisoner of Chillon* (1816). Like the third canto of *Childe Harold*, this narrative poem was written under the influence of Swiss scenery. The ancient castle of Chillon stands at the east end of Lake Geneva. The poem is a vivid and sympathetic account of the castle dungeon in

which lay Bonnivard (1496–1570), a French gentleman who suffered because he aided the people of Geneva against Charles III of Savoy.

The Dramas. — Byron had keen dramatic instincts, but he allowed his feelings to dominate his imagination. This is appropriate enough in lyrics, even if it is not so desirable in drama. Shakespeare hid himself so well that we know not which one of his hundreds of characters is most like their creator. Byron, on the other hand, reveals himself, in his favorite moods of disdain or remorse, more than any great poet in English literary history. *Manfred* (1817) and *Cain* (1822) are two of his most striking dramas, both of which have been acted in Germany.

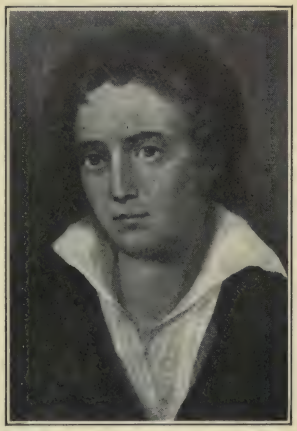
Byron's Literary Position. — If sentimentalism involves keen interest in one's own emotions, then Byron is perhaps the greatest of all sentimental poets. Often he seems to be afraid that readers will discover that he has sentiment — something which every man ought to have — and his ready wit comes to the rescue. The satire that steals into some of his most beautiful passages tends to weaken the wings of his imagination, so that he seldom rises to heights of true emotion. Gifted with wit, eloquence, love of the sea and the mountains, Byron takes high rank as a poet of description and sentiment. His writings have exercised no little influence, especially in France, Germany, and Russia, some of whose writers have openly professed to be his followers.

Percy Bysshe Shelley (1792–1822)

Shelley enjoyed rebellion against things as they are, and attempted through his poetry to reform the world. He may be compared to Blake as a mystic, beholding invisible presences, and believing in experiences that were sometimes purely imaginary. It was in 1792 that Percy Bysshe Shelley

was born at Field Place, near Horsham, in the county of Sussex. After leaving Eton in 1811, he was for a short time a student at Oxford. That same year he married a girl named Harriet Westbrook.

Poems Written in England. — Influenced by the manner of Southey, *Queen Mab* (1813) is a poem in sympathy with the aims of the French Revolution. Queen Mab, a fairy mentioned in the first act of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, leads the soul of the poet through the world, pointing out the faults connected with everything that is human. The wise fairy also reveals the fact that the world is ever moving on toward happiness.



From the portrait by A. Curran, National Portrait Gallery

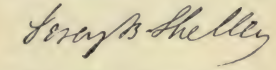


FIG. 107. — Percy Bysshe Shelley.

In blank verse *Alastor* (1815) is the story of a lonely spirit fleeing from itself through scenes of desolate grandeur, that are regarded as Wordsworth might regard them. Alastor is really Shelley expressing his longing for the vision of beauty, the love that is ideal, love as it is in heaven.

Another romance of revolution is the *Revolt of Islam* (1817). Some parts of the poem are hard to understand, because the author's thoughts are not clear to himself. The poet feels sure that Christianity and other matters are not yet perfect, and he resembles Burns in advocating woman's rights, though in a manner different from that of the northern poet.

Poems Written Abroad. — It is not for his dramas such as *The Cenci* (1819) that Shelley is remembered by lovers of

literature, but for his short simple lyrics. What splendor of imagination leaps through *The Sensitive Plant* (1820) with its longing for ideal beauty, and the swift *Ode to the West Wind* (1820) with its opening lines —

> O wild West Wind, thou breath of Autumn's being,
> Thou, from whose unseen presence the leaves dead
> Are driven, like ghosts from an enchanter fleeing.

Most popular and most musical of all these delicate lyrics is *The Cloud* (1820), whose opening words are a temptation to read again and again.

> I bring fresh showers for the thirsting flowers,
> From the seas and the streams;
> I bear light shade for the leaves when laid
> In their noonday dreams.

Surely the skylarks would never cease to sing songs of praise over the resting-place of Shelley, if only they could read and understand his tribute *To a Skylark* (1820). One stanza, creating beauty and joy even out of depression, has been quoted so often that every one knows —

> We look before and after,
> And pine for what is not:
> Our sincerest laughter
> With some pain is fraught;
> Our sweetest songs are those that tell of saddest thought.

An English Grave in Italy. — For four years Shelley had lived in Italy. One day in July a squall capsized the boat in which he was sailing in the Gulf of Spezzia. After the body drifted ashore, it was burned on the beach in accordance with the law of Italy, and the ashes were taken to rest in Rome. The year before the poet died, he had composed *Adonais*, an elegy on Keats, a volume of whose poems was in Shelley's

pocket at the time he was drowned. No elegy so great had been written since Milton's *Lycidas*, and this is how Shelley in the *Adonais* describes the place where his own remains now rest near those of Keats:

> the Spirit of the spot shall lead
> Thy footsteps to a slope of green access
> Where, like an infant's smile, over the dead
> A light of laughing flowers along the grass is spread.

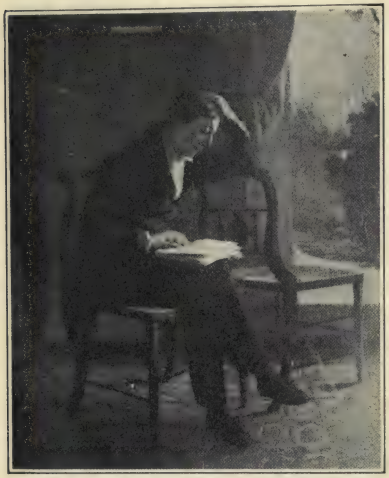
Shelley's Literary Position. — As an artist in words, Shelley has few rivals. The man who wrote the *Defence of Poetry* was an excellent writer of prose, but it is as a poet that he is known to most readers. His place is among the world's great masters of lyric poetry. Devoid of the wit of Byron, narrower and less profound in his knowledge of human nature than Burns, Shelley surpasses them both in sheer flights of imagination. Cowper and Wordsworth are mainly poets of individual men in rural communities, whereas Byron and Shelley are poets of humanity in its social aspects, struggling forward to achieve greater happiness. When Shelley is charmed by the simple aspects of life, he throws the strongest spell over his readers.

John Keats (1795–1821)

Next to the life of Chatterton, that of Keats is the briefest among English poets. The ancestry of Keats, like that of Coleridge, has been traced back to the old Keltic borderland — Cornish or Welsh. At school John Keats was a general favorite, enjoyed Latin poetry, and resembled Byron in being a clever boxer. In his fifteenth year he began to learn the art of surgery, but after a time he gave up the medical profession.

It was in 1813 that the poetic instincts of Keats were

awakened by reading Spenser's *Faerie Queene*. He now became so interested in the art of verse-writing that he tried to find out in what way the poets had achieved success. This lad of eighteen knew that it is necessary to write verse of some sort, before it is possible to write inspired or imaginative verse. For several years he made experiments in verse writing, especially in the heroic couplet and in the sonnet. This is easily seen when we examine the collection of poems which he published in 1817. No young man of twenty-two had ever produced such a sonnet as that of Keats on *Chapman's Homer*. It is as fine as any of the sonnets of Milton and Wordsworth. Its author forgot that it was not Cortez, but Balboa, who discovered the Pacific.



Painted from memory by Severn; National Portrait Gallery. Photographed by special permission of Sir George Scharf

John Keats

FIG. 108. — John Keats.

Endymion. — In 1818 Keats published *Endymion*, whose opening lines tell us that —

> A thing of beauty is a joy for ever:
> Its loveliness increases; it will never
> Pass into nothingness; but still will keep
> A bower quiet for us, and a sleep
> Full of sweet dreams.

This narrative poem, composed in heroic couplets, is dedicated to the memory of Chatterton. It relates the old Greek story of the love of the moon goddess for the shepherd boy Endymion. This boy is not unlike Keats himself. His imagination has been quickened through contact with the heavenly powers. Henceforth he strives to attain ideal beauty. The narrative is long, rather difficult to read as a story, yet strewn with many passages of poetic charm. It is the creation of one who has not yet set free all the power that is in him.

Later Years. — In 1819 Keats began to suffer from lung disease, and he sought relief in the mountain air of the north. When he returned to London, he fell in love with Fanny Brawne, a lady of great personal attractions and talent. Full of ambition, struggling against ill health, lashed by the critics, Keats knew that he must soon part forever from the woman he loved. Need we wonder that he deemed his name "writ in water"? With his faithful friend Severn he sailed for Italy in September, 1820. On the deck of the vessel he wrote his last sonnet, longing —

> Still, still to hear her tender-taken breath,
> And so live ever — or else swoon to death.

From Naples he went to Rome where, early in 1821, in his twenty-fifth year, he breathed his last in the arms of his friend Severn. There he lies, a short distance from the dust of Shelley.

Poems. — In 1820, the year he sailed for Italy, Keats published the third and last volume of his poems. *Isabella* is a story of medieval Florence. It tells of the murder of Isabella's lover, Lorenzo, by her two brothers and of her tender devotion to his memory. As poetry it is superior to *Endymion*. The longest of these later poems is the unfinished *Hyperion*. Suggested by Milton's *Paradise Lost*, it is the story of a

struggle between superhuman powers. Hyperion leads the Titans, who are overthrown by the younger deities led by the sun-god Apollo. The poem suggests that mere physical light is inferior to the light of beauty, which comes through thought and memory. *The Eve of St. Agnes* describes the elopement of Porphyro and Madeline, and *Lamia* depicts the ruin of a young knight by enchantment.

The Odes. — The same volume contains six odes of which *To the Nightingale* is one of those most admired for its classic beauty. The poet listens to —

> Perhaps the self-same song that found a path
> Through the sad heart of Ruth, when, sick for home,
> She stood in tears amid the alien corn;
> The same that oft-times hath
> Charmed magic casements, opening on the foam
> Of perilous seas, in faery lands forlorn.

Other readers prefer the ode *On a Grecian Urn*, whose closing lines declare that —

> Beauty is truth, truth beauty — that is all
> Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know.

Keats's Literary Position. — This last quotation strikes a keynote which is most clearly heard in the odes of Keats. More than any of the English poets he is fond of poetry for its own sake, without regard to any lesson which it may convey. In his love of beauty he most resembles Spenser. Unlike Byron and Shelley, Keats cares nothing about current topics, which to him seem mere bubbles upon the surface of the stream of Time. As an artist in words and a master of cadence he has few rivals. His work left a deep impression upon Tennyson and other poets of the nineteenth century.

2. PROSE WRITERS

Edward Gibbon (1737–1794), who had been educated at Oxford, achieved literary fame through *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (1776–1788). The subject was suggested to him during a visit to Rome in 1764, while listening to the barefooted friars as they sang their vespers in the temple of Jupiter. This work comprises nearly thirteen centuries of the world's history, ending with the taking of Constantinople by the Turks. It is in the sections dealing with Christianity that Gibbon is unsympathetic, and his taste in other matters at times is doubtful. It remains the most remarkable work of its kind in the English language.

Richard Brinsley Sheridan (1751–1816), an orator as well as a dramatist, was born in Dublin. *The Rivals* (1775) is one of the few plays of the eighteenth century that still appear on the stage. Mrs. Malaprop, who poses as an educated lady of fashion, has caused much innocent laughter. Among Sheridan's other plays the most familiar is *The School for Scandal* (1777). This is the comedy in which Lady Teazle appears. Not since the Restoration period had plays so witty and so brilliant been composed in England.

Frances Burney (1752–1840) achieved literary distinction through her *Evelina* (1778), a lively social satire that is still highly entertaining. She is often known as Madame D'Arblay, because in 1793 Alexandre Pinchard D'Arblay married this witty, kindly authoress. Her two best novels, whose style owes much to a study of French literature, were penned before she was thirty.

Ann Radcliffe (1764–1822) wrote prose fiction, a form of literature which was scarce in the eighteenth century. Few people now read Mrs. Radcliffe's romances, yet she deserves mention as the authoress of *The Italian* (1797), the best prose romance written before Scott's time. Her *Mysteries*

of Udolpho (1794) is superior to Walpole's Gothic romance, even if it is by no means the best of her works. She knew how to tell a story, and she knew how to surprise her readers.

Maria Edgeworth (1767–1849), daughter of an Irish landlord, with no little humor and pathos depicts Irish life in *Castle Rackrent* (1800). Miss Edgeworth's numerous works are usually composed with taste and with sympathy, and they were widely read. In her second series of *Fashionable Tales* was included *The Absentee* (1812), which Macaulay considered one of the best novels ever written by a woman. Her stories for children are still admired, possibly suggesting to Scott his fascinating *Tales of a Grandfather*.



After the painting by Chappel

FIG. 109. — Maria Edgeworth.

Jane Austen (1775–1818), a native of Steventon in Hampshire, enjoys the rare distinction of having written books that are more popular now than they were when they were published more than a century ago. Though it was not printed until after her death, *Northanger Abbey* (1797) was written in her twenty-second year. It is partly a mock imitation of the Gothic romance, but Miss Austen was strong as a writer of realistic fiction; that is, she wrote novels concerning what she had observed. Naturally her heroines are better drawn than her heroes, and yet her male characters are not wooden dolls.

Miss Austen's first great novel was *Sense and Sensibility* (1811), in which she quietly ridicules the sentimental style of novel, of which Richardson was the pioneer. This was followed by *Pride and Prejudice* (1813), one of the classics of English prose fiction. In Miss Austen's pages there is nothing to startle the reader, yet she has perhaps never been surpassed in delineating the little vanities and quiet virtues of everyday society. She has the gift of making ordinary things interesting.



From an original family portrait

FIG. 110. — Jane Austen.



After the portrait by Wm. Hazlitt

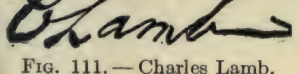


FIG. 111. — Charles Lamb.

Charles Lamb (1775–1834), essayist, critic, and poet, was a schoolmate of Coleridge and a friend of Wordsworth and Southey. He earned his bread and butter by acting as a clerk for the East India Company in London. In 1806 his farce, *Mr. H.*, was produced on the stage for one night, and when the audience began to hiss it, Lamb joined heartily in the hissing. Next year appeared *Tales Founded on the Plays of Shakespeare*

by Charles and Mary Lamb. Lamb's *Tales* are the abridged dramas of Shakespeare rendered into charming prose. Among his verses *The Old Familiar Faces* (1798) is well known.

All through life the kindly essayist cared for and lived with his sister Mary. In his *Letters* he declares, "The greatest pleasure I know is to do a good action by stealth and have it found out by accident." His literary fame rests mainly on the inimitable *Essays of Elia* (1823) and *Last Essays of Elia* (1833), reprinted from the *London Magazine*. Their author reflects every mood and touches every chord of feeling with a master hand. Wit, humor, and delicate fancy are among the qualities that win the heart of every reader. Lamb's essays are more intimate, more human, than those of Addison and Steele.

Walter Savage Landor (1775–1864) was another man who gained his reputation by prose, rather than by volumes of verse. His greatest work is the *Imaginary Conversations of Literary Men and Statesmen* (1824–1829). It contains discussions of history, literary criticism, and other topics. Landor's style is inclined to be bookish; that is, much of the charm of his writing depends upon the possession of a fair amount of knowledge on the part of the reader.

William Hazlitt (1778–1830), whether we do or do not agree with his opinions, is always full of life, and so he has no trouble in keeping his readers awake. His first important work was *The Characters of Shakespeare's Plays* (1817), reprinted from Leigh Hunt's paper *The Examiner*. In the form of lectures he produced *English Comic Writers* (1819) and other works. Among his best-known essays is *Table Talk* (1821–1822). Hazlitt at his best is one of the most helpful and entertaining of English essayists, especially in the field of literary criticism.

James Henry Leigh Hunt (1784–1859) was an essayist, a poet, and a critic. His chief work was done while editor of a weekly journal known as *The Examiner*. Among his poems is the *Story of Rimini* (1816), which is based on one of the scenes in Dante's *Divine Comedy*. It is not so familiar as the shorter poems like *The Glove and the Lion* (answered by Browning in *The Glove*) and *Abou Ben Adhem* (1844). *Wit and Humour* (1846) and *Men, Women, and Books* (1847) are among the best of his prose works. Hunt's essays are often attractive even for readers of the twentieth century, though Lamb and Hazlitt are more popular.

Thomas De Quincey (1785–1859)

In the famous *Confessions of an English Opium-Eater* (1821) is the familiar passage —

> Grief! thou art classed amongst the depressing passions. And true it is that thou humblest to the dust, but also thou exaltest to the clouds. Thou shakest us with ague, but also thou steadiest like frost. Thou sickenest the heart, but also thou healest its infirmities. — *Sequel*, Pt. I.



After the portrait by Sir George J. Watson Gordon

Thomas De Quincey

Fig. 112.— Thomas De Quincey.

It is in his *Confessions* that De Quincey proves himself to be a master-builder of dreams in dignified melodious prose. The finest section of this book is the last, where he recalls, as with an enchanter's wand, the array of fantastic phantoms which passed before him while he was under

the influence of tincture of opium. The truth is, however, that the brilliant De Quincey had been a natural seer of visions from childhood.

The son of a Manchester merchant, Thomas De Quincey was born in 1785, and in his eighteenth year he entered Oxford. His prose has been much admired for the gorgeous roll of its style, a style that is relieved at times by little jokes which puzzle rather than please some people. Among his numerous essays, some of which tell about himself, are *Suspiria de Profundis* (Sighs from the Depths, 1845), *The English Mail Coach,* and his ironical *Murder Considered as One of the Fine Arts,* the title of which illustrates De Quincey's occasional love of what is startling and contradictory. His critical reviews are often original and scholarly. Chivalrous in attitude, stately in style, is his *Joan of Arc* (1847), one of whose noble passages speaks for itself.

> What is to be thought of her? What is to be thought of the poor shepherd girl from the hills and forests of Lorraine, that — like the Hebrew shepherd boy from the hills and forests of Judea — rose suddenly out of the quiet, out of the safety, out of the religious inspiration, rooted in deep pastoral solitudes, to a station in the van of armies, and to the more perilous station at the right hand of kings? The Hebrew boy inaugurated his patriotic mission by an *act,* by a victorious *act,* such as no man could deny, but so did the girl of Lorraine, if we read her story as it was read by those who saw her nearest. Adverse armies bore witness to the boy as no pretender; but so they did to the gentle girl. Judged by the voices of all who saw them *from a station of good will,* both were found true and loyal to any promises involved in their first acts. Enemies it was that made the difference between their subsequent fortunes.

De Quincey's prose, with its careful detail, its splendid rhythm, and its choice diction, contains something for every taste. He is a whimsical genius, highly entertaining to a

reader with a little leisure. Like Kipling, his remarks sometimes remind him of another story, but unlike Kipling he tells it before he returns to the one with which he started. He was a man with that love of imagery so characteristic of the English romantic movement. De Quincey influenced Ruskin and other writers of the nineteenth century. In 1859 he died near Edinburgh, where he spent the last thirty years of his life.

Sir Walter Scott (1771–1832)

Lights and Shadows. — 'Tis night in Edinburgh. The silvery starlight smiles upon the city in whose bosom is gathered much of the glory and the sorrow of thirteen hundred years. Again across the centuries we hear the farewell salute of the Castle cannon as James IV rides cheerily to that death on Flodden Field (1513), which is depicted in *Marmion*. Once more we behold Wilson, the daring smuggler, brought from his cell in the Tolbooth jail (1736), which Scott calls the Heart of Midlothian. Once more we catch the drone of the bagpipes, as the rebel troops march along the Canongate (1745) under officers such as Waverley.



From the portrait by Sir W. J. Gordon

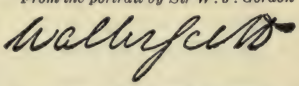


Fig. 113. — Sir Walter Scott.

Behind such scenes as these are loves and sorrows unknown to the world. For a moment they appear in an old song or ballad, only to vanish into the mist. Behind the historic chivalry of bygone days, behind gayety and valor open to the eyes of the world, lie shadows — the struggles of

those in poverty, the sigh of a breaking heart, the stain of unavailing tears for a lover buried on the distant field of battle. A few, only a few, of those lights and shadows are recalled in the impassioned songs and stories of Walter Scott.

First Period of Scott's Career. — Walter Scott, poet and novelist, was born at Edinburgh in 1771. It was his mother who first awakened in him a love of poetry. This love was deepened by his own interest in old ballads, which are stories



FIG. 114. — The Tolbooth in the Canongate, Edinburgh.

in verse; whereas Burns had been first interested in old songs, which are verses that express feeling. In 1783 young Scott entered the University of Edinburgh, excelling as a student of history, and then he studied law in his father's office.

His first literary work was in the form of translations from German. The author of the *Man of Feeling*, Henry Mackenzie, to whom Scott afterward dedicated *Waverley*, had lectured in Edinburgh on German literature, so that the study became fashionable. Bürger's *Lenore* was translated

by Scott (1796) in a single night, and later he made other translations from German. Next year he was an officer in a corps of volunteer cavalry. The same year Scott married Charlotte Carpenter or Charpentier, an English lady of French descent, with whom he lived very happily.

His genial nature won for him many friends, some of whom helped to collect old ballads and stories. Scott had a better chance to make such a collection when in 1799 he became sheriff of Selkirkshire, a position which comprises all the duties of a county judge. Ballads of his own appeared in 1800, and two years later he published the *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*, a collection which included many popular ballads never before printed.

The Second Period. — Scott, like Shakespeare, was not a class poet, but a man whose sympathy extended to all classes, the poor as well as the rich. Those laureates of the people, whom we term ballad singers, were by no means all gone in Scott's day, for that was a time when vaudeville and motion-picture shows were unknown. It is characteristic of Scott that the earliest of his metrical romances, the *Lay of the Last Minstrel* (1805), is a story sung or recited by a poor old man who made his living by singing to the accompaniment of his harp. The tale is of the sixteenth century, though the lay or poem is supposed to be sung a century later.

> A wandering harper, scorned and poor,
> He begged his bread from door to door. — *Introd.*

Scott's readers are often reminded of the claims of the lowly. The springs of pity are always kept unchoked. He brings home to us the appeal of failure, the poetry of lost causes, and at the same time his common sense always sees the origin of success.

It was at his farm of Ashestiel on the river Tweed that Scott completed the foregoing picture in verse, and then came

Marmion (1808), whose hero is an Englishman. No literary work ever did so much to break down the national prejudices of England and Scotland. The poet deliberately makes the love story reach its climax at the battle of Flodden, the greatest of England's triumphs over Scott's native land. His compliment to womanhood is familiar.

> O Woman ! in our hours of ease,
> Uncertain, coy, and hard to please,
> And variable as the shade
> By the light quivering aspen made;
> When pain and anguish wring the brow,
> A ministering angel thou ! — Canto VI, xxx.

Most of us have read the poet's closing wish :

> To thee, dear schoolboy, whom my lay
> Has cheated of thy hour of play,
> Light task and merry holiday !

When Scott published *The Lady of the Lake* (1810), he coaxed men and boys all over the English-speaking world to enjoy poetry. He taught the Highlander and the Lowlander of Scotland to respect and admire each other's good qualities. This poem tells how Fitz-James during a deer-hunt (about 1535) loses his way near the lake called Loch Katrine, which lies in that district of Perthshire known as the Trossachs. He meets the dark-haired Ellen Douglas, the Lady of the Lake.



FIG. 115. — Ellen Douglas.

A foot more light, a step more true,
Ne'er from the heath-flower dash'd the dew;
E'en the slight harebell raised its head,
Elastic from her airy tread. — Canto I, xviii.

She is the daughter of an outlawed gentleman, who is under the protection of Roderick Dhu and his clansmen. Finally, through Ellen, her father is reconciled to King James V, whom she had supposed to be Fitz-James.



FIG. 116. — Loch Katrine, with Ellen's Isle.

Many other poems were written by Scott, the noblest of which is the story of Macdonald, *Lord of the Isles* (1815), a romantic poem based partly upon Barbour's *Bruce*. The incidents of love and adventure lead up to the battle of Bannockburn. All Scott's poems are full of action. As a poet he has perhaps no superior in describing men that can fight for home and freedom.

Third Period. — The third period from 1814 to 1826 was the brightest in Scott's career, and it was during these twelve years that he published his finest novels. In 1812 he left Ashestiel to reside at Abbotsford, and two years later he published *Waverley*, a story of the rebellion of 1745. The book was commenced

in 1806, and thrown aside because a friend did not seem to care for it. Scott came across the opening chapters in an old desk, and completed the story in about four weeks. Although its author was unknown it captivated the fancy of the entire English-speaking world.

Scott did not cease to write poetry, but he knew that more people enjoy prose. The rest of the novels came out in rapid succession. Among the best are *Guy Mannering*, with its delightful tint of fortune-telling; *Old Mortality*, showing us the Scottish Covenanters, that is, people of the seventeenth century who made a covenant or agreement to uphold their own form of church government; *Rob Roy*, revealing one of Scott's finest heroines, Diana Vernon; *The Heart of Midlothian*, with its account of the noble Jeanie Deans.



FIG. 117. — Ivanhoe.

In 1820 came *Ivanhoe*, a romance whose scene is laid in England during the reign of Richard I (1189–1199), when the Normans were still inclined to despise the Saxons. Ivanhoe, the crusader who returns to England in disguise, has won the admiration of thousands of readers. Who is not familiar with Robin Hood, Friar Tuck, Lady Rowena, and especially with Rebecca, one of the noblest portraits of womanhood in English literary history? Scott

is said to have drawn her portrait from Washington Irving's account of a Philadelphia Jewess. Ivanhoe, the English knight, becomes her champion against the haughty Knight Templar.

Other splendid historical romances of this period are *The Abbot,* with its portraits of the unfortunate Mary Stuart and the fine heroine Catherine Seyton; *Kenilworth,* dealing with Queen Elizabeth and Amy Robsart; *Quentin Durward* and the exciting adventures in France; and *The Talisman,* in which the crusaders try to rescue the Holy Land from the Mohammedans.

The Fourth Period. — In recognition of his literary genius Scott, like Macaulay, Tennyson, Barrie, and other noted writers, was offered a title. Six years later came a misfortune that ultimately cost him his life. In order to assist his publisher Ballantyne, Scott became a partner, though he took no direct interest in the business details. In 1826 the firm became bankrupt, with debts amounting to more than half a million dollars. Friends offered to help Scott, but he was too proud to accept help and too honorable to make settlement with the creditors. Always he had been a hard worker, and now in the spirit of true heroism he began to toil harder than ever in order to pay every creditor. In five years he repaid more than half of the indebtedness, and Scott's executors paid the remainder.

Among the works that Scott now produced were *Woodstock,* introducing Cromwell and other celebrities; *The Fair Maid of Perth,* with its thrilling account of the fight on the North Inch of Perth; and *Tales of a Grandfather* (1826–1831). A child can understand and enjoy those tales; a man will not readily lay them aside.

Dryburgh Abbey. — It was in the autumn of 1831 that Scott sailed to Europe in search of health. The following summer, when he returned home to Abbotsford, his dogs

fawned upon him with delight and licked their master's hands. On the 23d of September, 1832, the spirit of this great and good man had fled. Within the ivy-mantled walls of Dryburgh Abbey he rests, while near at hand the river Tweed winds gently toward the North Sea.

Classification of the Novels. — The Waverley novels, taking their title from the first of the series, may be divided into three classes — those whose scenes are (1) Scottish, (2) English, (3) Foreign.



From the painting by Millais

FIG. 118. — The Bride of Lammermoor.

The Scottish prose romances or novels are *Waverley* (1814); *Guy Mannering* (1815); *The Antiquary*, *The Black Dwarf*, and *Old Mortality* (1816); *Rob Roy* (1817); *The Heart of Midlothian* (1818); *The Bride of Lammermoor* and *The Legend of Montrose* (1819); *The Monastery* and *The Abbot* (1820); *The Pirate* (1821); *St. Ronan's Well* (1823); *Redgauntlet* (1824); *Chronicles of the Canongate* (1827); *The Fair Maid of Perth* (1828); *Castle Dangerous* (1831).

The English novels are *Ivanhoe* (1820); *Kenilworth* (1821); *The Fortunes of Nigel* (1822); *Peveril of the Peak* (1823); *The Betrothed*, whose scenery is Welsh (1825); *Woodstock* (1826).

The foreign novels are *Quentin Durward* (1823); *The*

Talisman (1825); *Anne of Geierstein* (1829); *Count Robert of Paris* (1831).

Although a novel is supposed to be a picture of real life as observed by the novelist, Scott treated of the past so as to make it as real and natural as life to-day. The older romance was fanciful and inclined to be unreal, but Scott changed romance so that it is practically a novel beautified by romantic or imaginative color borrowed from history. Sometimes the opening chapters of the Waverley novels seem a little tedious, but the remainder is highly entertaining and sometimes thrilling.

Character Drawing. — Six years before Scott married Charlotte Carpenter, he was in love with another lady, who preferred to be wedded to a wealthy banker. It has been alleged that Scott's disappointment affected the fate of some of his heroines, but this is extremely doubtful. The most delightful of all the heroines is Jeanie Deans, not a lady of fashion, but a girl in humble life, who wins every one by her sterling character.

With the exception of Shakespeare, no writer of English has ever created a greater variety of characters than Scott. Gentiles and Jews, Christians and Mohammedans, gypsies and queens, beggars and kings, smugglers and teachers, soldiers of fortune and preachers, are depicted with a kindly humor and sympathy. These characters live because their creator was alive, full of fire and energy; they live because the man who sympathizes with opposites is dramatic by instinct.

Scott's Place in Literature. — As a poet Scott possesses that love of nature which has always been a feature of the poets of the north. His romantic landscapes are based upon actual observation, and his narratives, whether in verse or in prose, are never mere fancies of the brain. Like Burns and Byron, he was widely read in his own day, and he has stood

the test of time better than Byron, even if not so successfully as Burns.

It is in prose fiction, however, that Scott attained greatest renown. He was the creator of the historical romance. He has had numerous followers, yet none has outshone the Wizard of the North as a story-teller, even if we admit that he wrote so hurriedly as to fall into occasional mistakes in the construction of his sentences. Dumas and Victor Hugo in France, besides many others all over the world, have imitated the author of the Waverley novels. The good sense, the varied knowledge, the powerful memory, the seeing eye, the constructive imagination of Scott enabled him to add much to the happiness of the world, and this is an achievement which is not likely to be soon forgotten.

SUMMARY

1. The romantic period of literature is swayed by high imaginative activity, which shows itself in different ways.

2. Percy's *Reliques* (Relics or Remains) quickens our appreciation of history. Cowper's poetry is realistic rather than romantic. In other words Cowper usually described what he had observed.

3. Macpherson's *Ossian* seems to mark the beginning of the romantic movement in the British Isles.

4. The boy Chatterton wrote the Rowley poems and other works that are usually easier to understand than Blake's poems.

5. No other farmer ever wrote poems and songs like those composed by the author of *Tam o' Shanter*.

6. Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Southey are sometimes known as the Lake poets. There are few people who have not read the weird *Ancient Mariner*.

7. Campbell's naval songs and Moore's *Irish Melodies* are easy to read and enjoy.

8. The most popular of Byron's poems is *Childe Harold.* His *Prisoner of Chillon* tells about French prisoners in a Swiss castle.

9. In a new and beautiful way we can enjoy simple objects, if we read lyrics like *The Cloud* by Shelley and *To the Nightingale* by Keats.

10. During the romantic period great poets were more numerous than great writers of prose. Some of the best prose works were written by Gibbon the historian, by Sheridan the dramatist, by Frances Burney, Maria Edgeworth, and Jane Austen, the novelists, and by the essayists Lamb, Landor, Hazlitt, and Hunt.

11. De Quincey's splendid prose style influenced Ruskin and other writers of the nineteenth century. His *Confessions* relate some of his own experiences better than any autobiography.

12. The story of Ellen Douglas at Loch Katrine is what we find in Scott's *Lady of the Lake*, one of his romances in verse. Among the Waverley novels one of the most familiar is *Ivanhoe*, named after an English knight in disguise, who risked his life in order to protect Rebecca, the noble and attractive Jewess.

Test Questions

1. In which of Cowper's poems do we find the man whom Defoe called Robinson Crusoe? Which is the merriest of Cowper's poems? After reading one or more of his compositions, close the book and write in your own words what you have been reading.

2. Who was Ossian? Why did the Germans and others appreciate Macpherson's work? Who are the two youngest poets of this period? Why are they remembered? Have you ever tried to write verses about anything of interest? It may amuse you to try.

3. Why is Burns so popular? Which of his poems or songs do you like best? Why? Can you repeat any of the lines?

4. Who were the Lake poets, and why were they so called? Name one or two poems of each of these writers. Prepare an essay showing in what respects they were like or unlike each other. Read *The Ancient Mariner*, and reproduce it in your own words, stating what purpose its author had in view.

5. Which writers of this period showed great appreciation of German literature? How did they indicate their attitude? Was Southey the only writer of this period who took a pirate as his theme?

6. Do you remember which poet wrote about a girl in America? What writers of this period expressed a desire to be in America? Write a letter wherein you explain all this to one of your friends. How many of the birthplaces of famous people have you found on one of the maps? Tell what you know about the work done by Irish writers of this period.

7. Which literary men of this period allude to the sea? Why does *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* have such a title? Have you memorized any of the lines in the third or fourth canto, or have you read *The Prisoner of Chillon?* Which poem do you prefer? Why?

8. We study literature for pleasure, but we never find the pleasure until we read. Have you read any of the shorter poems of Shelley or Keats? Which?

9. Who coined such phrases as — God made the country, and man made the town; Variety's the very spice of life; Auld Lang Syne; A voice so thrilling ne'er was heard; A sadder and a wiser man; 'Tis distance lends enchantment to the view; Coming events cast their shadows before; The sweetest songs are those that tell of saddest thought; A thing of beauty is a joy for ever?

10. Do you recall any notable works of prose fiction written by women of this period? Which of these writers is the most distinguished? Why?

11. What did Lamb and his sister do to promote an interest in Shakespeare? Write an essay on any subject discussed by De Quincey or by any other essayist of the romantic period.

12. Name some of the leading characters that figure in *The Lady of the Lake*, and reproduce in your own words any one of the scenes in it or in *Ivanhoe*. In what respects do the Waverley novels differ from prose fiction previously written?

ADDITIONAL AUTHORS WITH CHIEF WORKS

Poets. — James Beattie of Laurencekirk (1735–1803), *The Minstrel;* Robert Ferguson (1750–1774), *The Farmer's Ingle;* George Crabbe (1754–1832), *The Village;* Carolina Oliphant, Lady Nairne (1766–1845), *The Rowan Tree* and other songs; James Hogg (1770–1835), *The Queen's Wake;* Robert Tannahill of Paisley (1774–1810), *Jessie the Flower of Dunblane;* Reginald Heber (1783–1826), *From Greenland's Icy Mountains* and other missionary hymns; James Sheridan Knowles (1784–1862), *Virginius,* a tragedy; Felicia Dorothea Hemans (1793–1835), *The Forest Sanctuary;* Thomas Hood (1799–1845), *Song of the Shirt* and other poems of pathos or humor, by the prince of English punsters.

Prose Writers. — Henry Mackenzie (1745–1831), *The Man of Feeling,* whose author wrote the earliest review of Burns's works; William Beckford (1759–1844), *Vathek;* Jane Porter (1776–1850), *Scottish Chiefs;* Henry Hallam (1777–1859), *Constitutional History of England;* John Wilson or "Christopher North" (1785–1854), *Noctes Ambrosianæ* (Divine Nights); Captain Frederick Marryat (1792–1848), *Midshipman Easy,* one of a series of first-class sea-stories for boys, the most interesting ever written; John Gibson Lockhart (1794–1854), *Life of Walter Scott,* one of the best biographies in English, written by Scott's son-in-law; Mrs. Anna Jameson (1794–1860), *Characteristics of Shakespeare's Women;* William Carleton (1794–1869), *Traits and Stories;* Michael Banim (1796–1876), *Crohoore of the Bill Hook;* Mary Shelley (1797–1851), *Frankenstein;* Samuel Lover (1797–1868), *Rory O'More.*

SUPPLEMENTARY READING

Inexpensive editions of many English classics are published by most educational firms. Biographies of leading writers of the romantic period are in the English Men of Letters series published by Macmillan ($.40 ea.) and in Great Writers series (Simmons), N. Y., $.40 ea., and Great Writers series by Scribner's ($1.00 ea.). Complete editions of the poets are in the Astor series published by Crowell ($.60), a firm which has several series at higher prices. Other well-known editions of English poets are the Globe by Macmillan ($1.75), the Oxford by the Oxford Press ($1.75), and the Cambridge by Houghton, from $1.50 to $3.00. The Dryburgh edition of the Waverley novels is published by Macmillan Co. at $1.25 each volume.

Besides general works previously mentioned, the following books are recommended:

a. For Classes

G. A. Aitken, *Sheridan's Rivals and The School for Scandal*, Phila. (McKay), 2 vols., $.35 ea.

A. Beatty, *De Quincey's Confessions of an Opium Eater*, N. Y. (Macmillan), $.25.

C. S. Bronson, *English Poems*, Chicago (University Press), Vols. 3 and 4, $1.00 ea.

C. S. Dougall, *The Burns Country*, N. Y. (Macmillan), $1.50.

E. D. Harris, *Story of Rob Roy*, N. Y. (Appleton), $.60.

J. Heermans, *Jane Austen's Pride and Prejudice*, N. Y. (Macmillan), $.25.

J. G. Lockhart, *Life of Walter Scott*, N. Y. (Crowell), $1.25.

C. M. Newman, *De Quincey's Joan of Arc*, etc., N. Y. (Macmillan), $.25.

C. H. Page, *British Poets of the Nineteenth Century*, Bost. (Sanborn), $2.00.

Bliss Perry, *Little Masterpieces of Literature*, N. Y. (Doubleday), $.50.

b. For Teachers and Others

H. A. Beers, *History of English Romanticism in the Eighteenth Century*, N. Y. (Holt), $2.00.

H. A. Beers, *History of English Romanticism in the Nineteenth Century*, N. Y. (Holt), $1.75.

C. S. Brown, *The Later English Drama*, N. Y. (Barnes), $1.20.

E. N. Calisch, *The Jew in English Literature*, Richmond, Va. (Book and Stationery Co.), $1.50.

W. J. Courthope, *History of English Poetry*, 6 vols., N. Y. (Macmillan), $3.25 each. Vol. VI.

F. B. Gummere, *Democracy and Poetry*, Bost. (Houghton), $1.50.

C. H. Herford, *The Age of Wordsworth*, N. Y. (Macmillan), $1.00.

E. M. Lang, *Literary London*, N. Y. (Scribner's), $1.50.

T. Percy, *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry*, N. Y. (Dutton), 2 vols., $.35 ea.

W. L. Phelps, *Beginnings of the English Romantic Movement*, Bost. (Ginn), $1.00.

W. W. Skeat, *Works of Thomas Chatterton*, N. Y. (Macmillan), 2 vols., Aldine ed., $.75 ea.

Macpherson's *Ossian* edited by W. Sharp, Canterbury Poets series, N. Y. (Simmons), $.40.

E. C. Stedman, *Nature and Elements of Poetry*, Bost. (Houghton), $1.50.

Leslie Stephen, *Hours in a Library*, 4 vols., N. Y. (Putnam's), $6.00. Discusses Scott, De Quincey, etc.

Arthur Symons, *Romantic Movement in English Poetry*, N. Y. (Dutton), $2.50.

R. Tombo, *Ossian in Germany*, N. Y. (Lemcke), $1.00.

CHAPTER XIV

THE VICTORIAN PERIOD

1837–1900

THE Victorian Period of English literature is unmarked by a single tendency such as we have noticed in the classical and romantic periods, and it exhibits so many great men that it is difficult to name it after any one person, as in the case of Chaucer, for instance. For these reasons it seems best to group the writers of the last sixty years of the nineteenth century under a single title which, like Anglo-Saxon or Norman-English, will distinguish this period from all others in literary history.

Democracy and Literature. — Each generation profits by the increasing thoughtfulness of earlier generations. At its beginning the Victorian period appeared to be in no way different from its predecessor, yet gradually public opinion became more enlightened as more people began to read and to think. The long war with Napoleon Bonaparte brought great suffering to the poor everywhere in Europe, and in England the effort to lighten the burden led to the Reform Bill of 1832. Finally about fifty years later, by one step after another, every law-abiding citizen of the British Isles had acquired the right to vote for a member of Parliament.

Literature was strongly affected by the growing power of the people. For a generation or more the literature of Britain flourished as it had rarely done since the Kelts and Saxons and Normans blended into a national unit. It seemed almost to have regained the youth and the vigor of

Shakespearean days. The age was inspired by enthusiasm, an enthusiasm which was, partly at least, the outcome of the longer and stronger arm of an intelligent democracy. Whether men of letters favored or opposed these signs of the times, their best work was an expression, if not an exposition, of modern progress in the form of noble prose and poetry.

Industrial Arts and Literature. — Another feature of this period is the expansion of art, especially the industrial arts. The first steamship had crossed the Atlantic in 1819, nearly twenty years before Victoria ascended the throne, but it was during her reign that the marine service of all nations attained such wonderful speed and comfort. Cheap postage, the telegraph, the telephone, the motor car, and a hundred other devices contributed so much to the exchange of thought with all countries that literature was bound to be affected.

No doubt the spirit of mechanical invention differs from the spirit of literary art, and yet who will deny that mechanical achievements have broadened artistic expression? There is no occasion to fear that inventions will injure poetry. From different angles both the industrial arts and the fine arts — music, painting, sculpture, architecture, poetry, etc. — are trying to solve the same problem. All are striving to increase human happiness. New inventions will afford new themes for literature, as Mr. Kipling, for instance, was quick to perceive.

Printing was invented in the fifteenth century, but it was not put to its full use until the Victorian period. Before that time newspapers, magazines, and books appealed mainly to the learned or the wealthy, and not to all grades of civilized society. That this expansion in the use of printing had a direct effect upon literature, few will care to deny. Prose fiction, for instance, never attained such a place as it did during the nineteenth century, and its heroes and heroines

are mainly persons whom we may meet in the street any day. The epic of old was concerned with gods and aristocratic heroes; the novel of the Victorian period is virtually the poor man's epic.

Scientific Thought and Literature. — If the Victorian period was marked by social progress and by invention, it was also a time of remarkable scientific thought. The doctrine of evolution advanced by Charles Darwin (1809–1882) and by Alfred Russel Wallace (1823–1913) concerns itself with biology, and it is only one of a number of theories. Public discussion of the views of Darwin, Herbert Spencer (1820–1903), and other thinkers strongly affected the thought and the literature of the latter part of the nineteenth century. It was then that the minute delineation of human character and human motives became prominent in prose fiction. The problems aroused by scientific discussions furnished novelists, poets, and dramatists with new themes. Whatever interests humanity most is an important part of life, and life is the ultimate source of all literature.

1. *POETS*

Elizabeth Barrett Browning (1806–1861)

In power of sympathy and self-sacrifice, in quick appreciation of the finer issues of life, and in other respects woman has always been man's superior. It is significant that the first illustrious writer of the Victorian period was Elizabeth Barrett, who became the wife of the poet Robert Browning. In her fourteenth year she wrote her first published poem, the *Battle of Marathon*, whose theme takes us back to the year 490 B.C., when the Greeks under Miltiades defeated the Persian invaders. Miss Barrett had a good education, including a knowledge of Greek. This was clearly proved

when she issued a version of the *Prometheus Bound* (1833), a translation from the Greek of Æschylus. These earlier poems show the influence of Pope and Byron.



From the painting by Gordigiani

FIG. 119. — Elizabeth Barrett Browning.

Champion of the Children. — It was in the second stage of her career (1833–1845) that Miss Barrett transformed grief into pleasure. For years she had been an invalid, yet she was never forgetful of the sorrows of others. The volume entitled *The Seraphim* (1838) contains beautiful religious poetry. *Romaunt of the Page* came out in 1839, and *Poems* five years later.

The gifted poetess had by this time become the avowed champion of defenceless childhood. Her *Cry of the Children* is a passionate appeal for the protection of poor children overworked in mines and factories. With convincing directness and simplicity she asks —

> Do ye hear the children weeping, O my brothers,
> Ere the sorrow comes with years?
> They are leaning their young heads against their mothers,
> And *that* cannot stop their tears.

The young lambs are bleating in the meadows;
The young birds are chirping in the nest;
The young fawns are playing with the shadows;
The young flowers are blowing toward the west —
But the young young children, O my brothers,
They are weeping bitterly!
They are weeping in the playtime of the others,
In the country of the free.

Sonnets from the Portuguese. — In 1845 Miss Barrett was loved by the great poet Robert Browning. In her *Sonnets from the Portuguese* (1850), all of which were composed prior to her marriage, she breathes forth her ideas of pure love. None of the sonnets was shown to her lover until after the wedding in 1846. These forty-four sonnets are entirely original, the title being chosen merely as a disguise. In beauty and sincerity they occupy a high place among English love sonnets.

Life in Italy. — When in 1846 the Brownings took up their residence at Florence in Italy, Mrs. Browning's fame was higher than that of her husband. For fifteen years she resided at the Casa Guidi (Guidi House), and there it was that she wrote *Casa Guidi Windows* (1851), in which she describes the struggle of Italy to drive out the Austrian conquerors. *Aurora Leigh* (1856), the last of her love romances, is a long narrative poem that advocates social reform. In 1861 Mrs. Browning died at her Italian home. She rests near the main entrance to the English Cemetery in Florence. On her monument is the simple inscription, E. B. B.

Mrs. Browning's Place in Literature. — Mrs. Browning holds the highest place among English poetesses, even if it be admitted that she is sometimes careless in form. Her spontaneity and her occasional indifference to the rules of verse remind us of Byron, yet she rises far above him in self-restraint and in sincerity. Her lyric expressions of sympathy with the downtrodden are suggestive of Cowper and Burns,

and yet she is the slave of no predecessor. Her independence is one of her leading characteristics. It is by her lyrics, and especially by her sonnets, that Mrs. Browning is likely to be remembered long after the present generation has disappeared.

Edward Fitzgerald (1809–1883)

Fitzgerald, like Burke, is a Norman-Irish surname, although Edward Fitzgerald was born at Bredfield House, Suffolk. At Cambridge he was studying in the same college with Tennyson and Thackeray, and in later life he was a friend of both the poet and the novelist. His translations from Greek and Spanish are practically forgotten, but his *Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam* (1859) is familiar. Rubaiyat is a Persian word meaning quatrains or four-lined stanzas. Omar Khayyam means Omar the Tent-maker, a Persian astronomer and poet whose home was at Naishapur about eight centuries ago.

Fitzgerald freely translated a number of Omar's stanzas and printed seventy-five of them in 1859, adding other stanzas in later editions. The poem creates the impression of one who has lost the hope and the enthusiasm of healthy manhood. A note of the sombre music of Fitzgerald's version may be heard in —

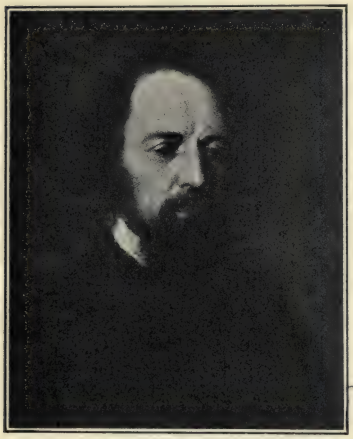
> Alas, that spring should vanish with the rose!
> That youth's sweet-scented manuscript should close!
> The nightingale that in the branches sang,
> Ah, whence, and whither flown again, who knows?

Alfred, Lord Tennyson (1809–1892)

In 1809 at Somersby in Lincolnshire the " roofs heard the earliest cry " of Alfred Tennyson. As a boy he was writing verses in imitation of Pope and Scott and Byron, and in his

eighteenth year appeared *Poems by Two Brothers,* a title scarcely accurate, since Alfred, Frederick, and Charles Tennyson were contributors.

Next year Alfred entered Trinity College, Cambridge, where his friendship began with Arthur, son of Henry Hallam the historian. Young Tennyson won the chancellor's gold medal for *Timbuctoo* (1829), a poem written in blank verse. In 1830 he published a volume containing such poems as *Mariana* and *Oriana.* Evidently the poet had not yet attained vigor and naturalness, though he was already revealing his acute sense of rhythm.



From the painting by Watts

Tennyson

FIG. 120. — Alfred, Lord Tennyson.

In 1833 came another series of poems, including *The Lady of Shalott, The Palace of Art,* and *The Lotos-Eaters,* the last of which has the word-music and the dreamy charm of Spenser and Keats. If we look with the poet's eyes, it is alluring —

> To muse and brood and live again in memory
> With those old faces of our infancy,
> Heap'd over with a mound of grass. — Stanza V.

For nine years Tennyson published nothing, partly because of the bitter contempt of the London *Quarterly,* one of the leading British magazines. In 1842 were printed two volumes, which brought Tennyson a popularity that contin

ued until his death. Some of the poems in these volumes were revised reprints of earlier work, but among the new creations were *Morte d'Arthur* (Death of Arthur), *Dora*, *Ulysses*, *Locksley Hall*, *Sir Galahad*, and *Break, Break, Break.*

In the old Greek story concerning Ulysses, the poet sees and expresses romance in its perfect form. It is useless to comment upon the art of lines such as —

> The lights begin to twinkle from the rocks:
> The long day wanes: the slow moon climbs: the deep
> Moans round with many voices. Come, my friends,
> 'Tis not too late to seek a newer world.
> Push off, and sitting well in order smite
> The sounding furrows; for my purpose holds
> To sail beyond the sunset and the baths
> Of all the western stars, until I die.
> It may be that the gulfs will wash us down:
> It may be we shall touch the Happy Isles. — 54–63.

Ideals of progress, of human evolution, so fill *Locksley Hall* that many readers have been content to wait —

> Till the war drum throbb'd no longer, and the battle-flags were furl'd
> In the Parliament of man, the Federation of the world.
> — Stanza 64.

The lights deepen the shadows of *Break, Break, Break*, with its four short stanzas. Intense grief has few words. Home come the ships —

> But O for the touch of a vanish'd hand,
> And the sound of a voice that is still! — Stanza 3.

The Princess. — In 1847 came a delicately playful college poem in blank verse, *The Princess*. Through the figure of the Princess Ida the poet presents his conception of the aspirations of a woman of intellect. This poem includes the splendid lullaby *Sweet and Low*, as well as short lyrics

that were never excelled by their author. The more one dwells upon them, the more is one convinced that neither Tennyson nor any other person could create more purely poetic, more beautiful lines than —

> O sweet and far from cliff and scar
> The horns of Elfland faintly blowing!
> — *Bugle Song*, Stanza 2.

Here Tennyson is like a magician standing at the gateway to the land of enchantment.

In Memoriam. — In 1850 Tennyson succeeded Wordsworth as poet laureate and married Emily Sellwood. He also published his best known work *In Memoriam*. Seventeen years earlier his close friend, Arthur Henry Hallam, had died in Vienna. In memory of him the poet presents a record of his own sorrow and religious doubts during the three years following his friend's death. In spite of its length Tennyson's lament is more human, more appealing, than Milton's *Lycidas* or Shelley's *Adonais*. It may be compared with Pope's *Essay on Man*, in having furnished a large number of familiar quotations. It is a stately defence of the poet's faith in the immortality of the soul. It does not sound the depths of human agony and despair. It has beauty of phrase and sentiment rather than profound passion or insight, and to live in the atmosphere of this noble elegy is to live far above self-seeking worldliness. It is to dwell in a region of sweet reasonableness.

Idylls of the King. — A series of twelve poetical pictures of King Arthur and his knights of the Round Table is what we find in Tennyson's *Idylls of the King*. This series is based mainly on Malory's *Morte d'Arthur* and partly on Lady Charlotte Guest's translation of the *Mabinogion* (1838). Mabinogion means juvenile tales, and Lady Guest's work is a translation from Welsh of four Arthurian romances of

the twelfth century, and seven other prose tales found in the Red Book of the fourteenth century.

Tennyson made a long study of the Arthur legend, and visited Wales because of its association with the king of ancient Britain. After working on the poems for about twenty years, he published in 1859 the first installment of the *Idylls* in *Enid, Vivien, Elaine,* and *Guinevere,* and it was not until 1885 that the last of the twelve idylls was completed.



By G. Doré

FIG. 121.—Lancelot bids adieu to Elaine.

The germ of these poems in blank verse has been traced to the short lyric entitled *The Lady of Shalott.* The spirit of the man who loves honor above all else, the same spirit that ennobles Scott's metrical romances, is seen in the selection of King Arthur as the hero of the twelve idylls. The stories are allegories, in which Arthur is the soul or the soul's ideal, Modred (his nephew) is unbelief or scepticism, Merlin science, Excalibur (the magic sword) war, and the Round Table is the means at man's disposal, his capacity for improvement. In short, the idylls are intended to represent the conflict of man's spirit with temptation. Arthur, as in Spenser's *Faerie Queene,* is the human soul, the gentleman, the ideal knight, fighting ever upward toward spiritual perfection.

Gareth and Lynette (1872). — Among the more notable idylls are *The Coming of Arthur, Gareth and Lynette, Lancelot and Elaine, The Holy Grail,* and *The Passing of Arthur.* A glance at two or three may illustrate the character of all the idylls. For instance, in the opening scene of *Gareth and Lynette,* Gareth, talking to himself, is eager in the springtime to see the world. He goes to his mother, Queen Bellicent, who consents to grant his desire if for a year and a day he will serve in disguise in the kitchen of King Arthur's palace at Camelot. The mother thinks that this stipulation will prevent the young prince from leaving the home of his father, King Lot. However, he leaves home and serves in the royal kitchen until one day Lynette appears at Arthur's court. She asks for a champion, Lancelot (the greatest of Arthur's knights), if possible, to deliver her sister Lyonors, who is detained against her will at Castle Perilous, her own home. The king, who knows that Gareth is no kitchen servant by training, sends him forth, much to the disgust of Lynette. Gareth overthrows four knights, and finds Lynette's sister safe at her castle. Gareth and Lynette, who have meantime become lovers, eventually marry.



By G. Doré

Fig. 122. — Elaine's body on way to King Arthur's Palace.

Lancelot and Elaine (1859). — Another great idyll relates the story of Elaine, daughter of the Lord of Astolat. She

loves Lancelot, a brave knight who is already interested in Queen Guinevere, Arthur's queen. Leaving his shield in care of Elaine, Lancelot rides forth with her brother Lavaine to fight in the tournament at Camelot. Lancelot in disguise wins the diamond prize, is wounded, and disappears. Sir Gawain, sent forth by the king to find the unknown knight, stops at Astolat, sees the shield of Lancelot, and leaves the diamond with Elaine. She finds Lancelot, her love is rejected, and she dies. Lancelot presents the diamond with other gems to Guinevere, who fancies that Lancelot loves Elaine. Guinevere hurls the diamonds into the stream at the very moment that Elaine's body is being carried on a barge toward Camelot. When the body is carried into the palace, King Arthur sees "the letter in her hand," opens it, and begins to read. Lancelot is smitten with remorse.



By G. Doré

FIG. 123. — King Arthur reading Elaine's letter.

The Passing of Arthur (1869). — Gawain's ghost appears to King Arthur in his sleep, warning him —

> Hail, King! to-morrow thou shalt pass away.
> Farewell! there is an isle of rest for thee. — Stanza 3.

Sir Bedivere urges the king to forget the dream and begin an attack upon knights who were unfaithful to their vows.

Arthur and his army pursue Modred into the land of Lyonesse, where a terrible battle takes place in the winter's mist by the seashore. The king slays Modred, his hostile nephew, and falls mortally wounded. At the king's request Sir Bedivere reluctantly hurls the royal sword Excalibur into the mere. A black barge appears and King Arthur bids Sir Bedivere good-by. Aboard the barge the king says:

> Pray for my soul. More things are wrought by prayer
> Than this world dreams of. — 248–249.

Finally the barge sails with Arthur toward the island-valley of Avilion.

The Most Popular Poems. — Tennyson's son in memoirs of his father considers that, besides *In Memoriam*, the most popular poems are *Enoch Arden* (1864), *Aylmer's Field*, *The Grandmother*, *Sea Dreams*, *The Northern Farmer*, *Tithonus*, and *The Flower*. Few people, however, will readily accept this list without modification.

In reading the account of the battle of Balaclava (1854) in the London *Times*, Tennyson found there the phrase " some one had blundered," and the reporter's phrase was the origin of the metre of the *Charge of the Light Brigade*, besides furnishing the poet with one of the lines.

It was in 1855 that *Maud* was published. It is the story of a lover who serenades the squire's daughter. In a duel her brother is slain by the lover, who enlists in the army as it is about to start for the Crimea, in southern Russia. The poem is a protest against the worship of wealth, and its love-poetry is melodious.

The Dramas. — Tennyson's *Idylls*, rich in many respects, indicate that he was not highly gifted in dramatic skill or in portraying complex diversities of character. This is more clearly shown in such dramas as *Queen Mary* (1875), *Harold* (1877), and five others. The poet had a wonderful mastery

of all kinds of themes, but he lacked the knowledge of stagecraft necessary to make his plays a success.

Crossing the Bar. — In 1884 Tennyson was made a peer under the title of Baron Tennyson of Aldworth and Farringford. Among his latest poems were *Tiresias* (1885); *Locksley Hall Sixty Years After* (1886), which is influenced by the attitude of Carlyle and Ruskin; *Demeter* (1889); and *Crossing the Bar* (1890). The last of these poems is one of the choicest, not a word of which is wasted. Its last stanza appears at the end of most collections of the poet's works.

> For tho' from out our bourne of Time and Place
> The flood may bear me far,
> I hope to see my Pilot face to face
> When I have crost the bar.

On the sixth of October, 1892, with the moon shimmering on the near-by copy of Shakespeare, Tennyson crossed the bar. To use the phrase that he coined for his friend Hallam in the *In Memoriam* —

> God's finger touched him, and he slept. — LXXXV.

He was buried in Westminster Abbey.

Tennyson's Place in Literature. — Tennyson is one of the most polished lyric poets in English. For cadences and harmonies, for all the latent music of our language, he had an instinct that recalls Spenser and Keats. Poems such as *Ulysses*, *Tithonus*, and *Lucretius*, suggest many a stray note of the Greek and Roman singers who could make their lines mimic the song of the thrush or thunder with the deep symphony of a storm at sea. Tennyson is classical in the lure of his technique, while he is modern in the employment or application of his art.

The poet has not smoothed out every foot of every line without paying the penalty. The intense humanity of Burns,

the cheery vigor of Scott, the wit and dash of Byron, are alien to the typical Tennysonian poem. More than once, in watching words rather than ideas, the author of *Maud* lapses into lines such as —

> The white lake-blossom fell into the lake
> As the pimpernel dozed on the lea.

Great poems — they need not be long — are written not to be pretty or popular, but because they leap hot from the heart of a singer who cannot be mute. Lord Tennyson resembled Pope in being the most popular poet of his time, and we can scarcely conceive of a time when the best of his work will sink into oblivion. In many a brilliant epigram each poet uttered the opinions of his age. Whatever is truly classical is universal in its appeal, and whatever appeals to most men and women is not easily mangled by the tooth of Time.

Robert Browning (1812–1889)

Robert Browning was born at Camberwell, a suburb of London, in 1812. His mother, described by Carlyle as "the true type of a Scottish gentlewoman," contributed mainly to the boy's emotional and spiritual life. Except for a brief term at the University of London, Browning's education was under private tutors and under his father who was an ardent book-lover and a student of classical literature. Though he lacked the systematic training of Tennyson, many books were in his father's library, and even in his youth he had read books of which many older people had never heard.

Browning had the good sense to destroy all his boyish verses, so that the first poem known to the world was *Pauline* (1833). This is, like Shelley's *Alastor*, a study of the dangers that assail the soul of a poet. Not a single copy was

sold; but he had better luck with *Paracelsus* (1835), named after a Swiss medical thinker (1490–1541), who determined to become the greatest and most glorious man on earth. It is a lyrical drama, whose hero represents the failure of one who tries to serve others by knowledge without love. In other words, it shows that we must reach the head through the heart. The third early poem also gives us a peep into the workings of Browning's fertile brain. This is *Sordello* (1840), named after a poet of Italy. No unknown poet could hope to catch public attention with poems so long and so serious.

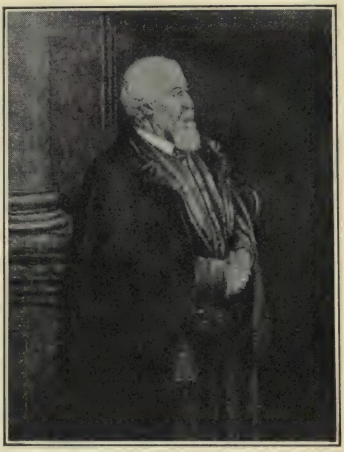


Fig. 124. — Robert Browning.

The Dramas. — The earliest of Browning's dramas was *Strafford* (1837). Others were *Pippa Passes* (1841), *King Victor and King Charles* (1842), *Return of the Druses* (1843), *A Blot in the 'Scutcheon* (1843), *Colombe's Birthday* (1844), *Luria* (1846), *Soul's Tragedy* (1846), *In a Balcony* (1853).

Most of the plots, not probable in real life, were invented by the poet. They are keen in their analysis of character, but they lack action, which is the very life-blood of a play on the stage. Above all, the characters speak in such a way that it is difficult to follow the story or action of the play. Of these dramas or dramatic poems *Pippa Passes* is best known. Browning had gone to Italy in 1838, and found himself in the little town of Asolo among the foothills of the Venetian Alps. This town is the background of five scenes.

Pippa, a little Italian girl, enjoys only one holiday, and on this day she goes out singing. The songs reach the ears of four distinct groups of people, as Pippa passes along, and in each case a tempted soul is encouraged to choose good rather than evil.

This poetic drama sums up the thought that Browning expresses everywhere. All things, no matter how they appear at the moment, ultimately work together for good. This is his gospel, his message of good news, the faith that inspires him with manly courage. Here it is in the simple little song from *Pippa Passes:*

The Year's at the Spring;
The Day's at the morn;
Morning's at seven;
The hillside's dew-pearled;
The bee's on the wing;
The snail's on the thorn:
God's in his heaven —
All's right with the world.

Bells and Pomegranates. — The foregoing drama was the first of a series of Browning's works entitled *Bells and Pomegranates* (1841–1846). The title is founded upon a verse in the Bible (*Exodus* xxviii. 33). Later the poet explained that he coined the title because it stood for "a mixture of music with discoursing, sound with sense, poetry with thought." Literally, a pomegranate is an Oriental fruit.

Under this general title eight numbers were published, among which were several of the dramas as well as *Dramatic Lyrics* (1842) and *Dramatic Lyrics and Romances* (1845). It was in her *Lady Geraldine's Courtship* (1845) that Miss Barrett made a complimentary reference to the *Bells and Pomegranates.* Through her cousin, John Kenyon, Browning met the lady who became his wife in 1846.

Dramatic Lyrics (1842). — Among the dramatic lyrics are *Cavalier Tunes*, composed by a descendant of Puritans, *Incident of the French Camp*, and *My Last Duchess*. In the *Cavalier Tunes* Browning seeks to produce the same effect as did Kipling in the *Barrack Room Ballads*, though, of course, Browning wrote before Kipling was born. They are rough, lively songs such as might be sung by Cavalier soldiers in the days of Milton.

The *Incident of the French Camp* tells of Napoleon's siege (1809) of Ratisbon, a city in the German state of Bavaria. A wounded French boy brings good news to the commander-in-chief, in whom all his soldiers had perfect confidence. This is the dramatic finish:

> The chief's eye flashed; but presently
> Softened itself, as sheathes
> A film the mother-eagle's eye
> When her bruised eaglet breathes;
> "You're wounded!" "Nay," the soldier's pride
> Touched to the quick, he said:
> "I'm killed, sire." And his chief beside,
> Smiling the boy fell dead.

In the few lines of *My Last Duchess* the poet shows us a Duke of Ferrara, who ought never to have been born. The scene is laid in the nobleman's Italian palace in the time of the Renaissance. This Duke is speaking politely, yet in a cold-blooded way, to a messenger who has come to arrange for a new duchess. The curtain is raised from the picture of the last duchess, who had for a short time been his happy young wife. The poem is a masterly study of character.

Dramatic Lyrics and Romances. — No poet ever loved horses more than Browning. Among the most popular of the dramatic lyrics and romances of 1845 is *How They Brought the Good News from Ghent to Aix*. The poet understood each gait of a horse so well that the rhythm of the poem

echoes a gallop, distinct enough from the gait of the third of the Cavalier Tunes. The real hero of this narrative poem is the good horse Roland, which is represented as galloping from Ghent in Belgium to Aix or Aix-la-Chapelle in Germany, a distance of about ninety miles. Although the ride is supposed to have taken place in the seventeenth century, Browning declared it had no historical foundation.

In this collection are three other familiar poems entitled *Home Thoughts from Abroad, Home Thoughts from the Sea,* and *The Lost Leader.* The first, written during the poet's trip to Italy in 1844, indicates homesickness; the second little poem, written during his voyage to Italy in 1838, voices his patriotism. Of *The Lost Leader* Browning confesses, "I undoubtedly did have Wordsworth in my mind — but simply as a model." In other words, the poem is not a picture of Wordsworth, who was a man of spotless honor, but of any man who changes his political views for the sake of gain.

Dramatic Monologues. — In 1846 Browning took his wife to Italy, where they lived happily, most of the time in Florence. In 1850 he published *Christmas-Eve and Easter-Day,* which discusses religious problems. Five years later appeared *Men and Women,* containing dramatic monologues such as were published in 1842 and 1845, and later in *Dramatis Personæ* (1864).

The monologue, or speech of one person, is very, very old in the history of literature, but Browning gave it a new power by using it as a means of revealing a man's inner life. We noticed this in *My Last Duchess.* The poet makes the man so real to the imagination of his readers that the name of Browning will always be linked with his vivid or dramatic monologues.

Browning was more sociable than Tennyson, and enjoyed meeting men and women. A humorous monologue, one of

those in *Men and Women* (1855), is *Up at a Villa — Down in the City.* It depicts a man in a country villa who craves city excitement.

> Had I but plenty of money, money enough and to spare,
> The house for me, no doubt, were a house in the city square.

Two others in the same volume are *The Patriot,* a study of the fickleness of the mob, and "*De Gustibus,*" which shows the poet's affection for England and Italy. Its title is part of the Latin saying, *De gustibus non disputandum,* There is no accounting for tastes.

The Ring and the Book. — When goldsmiths wish to cut or engrave ornamental designs on a gold ring, they can cover it with a coat of wax or varnish. This is scratched with an etching-needle in whatever designs are desired. When the ring is steeped in acid, the parts exposed by the needle are bitten or eaten by the acid. When the wax or varnish is removed, the pure gold is revealed with its beautiful designs. Browning's *The Ring and the Book* (1868–1869) has its title because this work, the most thoughtful of all English poems, is compared to a ring. The acid, as it were, of the poet's brain has worked to bring out the hidden beauty of the gold that he found within the covers of an old book.

In a market-stall of Florence, Browning found the book, which gave an account of a trial before the Roman courts. It is the trial of a certain Count Guido of Arezzo, who with his four servants was executed in 1698 for the murder of his young wife Pompilia and her adopted parents, Pietro and Violante. Count Guido has married Pompilia in the belief that she is an heiress. This middle-aged fortune-hunter makes her life miserable as soon as he learns that his young wife has no money. Through the kindness of a priest she escapes to Rome. The husband pursues, and she is placed in a convent, from which she is set free. She goes to her foster-

parents, who reside in a lonely Roman suburb. Her husband again hears of her release, and taking four of his young tenants or farm-servants with him, he sets out for his wife's residence. There he fatally stabs her and her parents.

The poem is a study of character. The most interesting of its twelve books show us the friendly priest, the wife, the murderer, and the Pope. Strongest of all of Browning's male characters is the aged Pope Innocent XII. Each character from his own point of view throws new light upon this story of spiritual tragedy.

Most of Browning's verse is dramatic in the sense that he delivers it through the mouth of an imaginary character. In this sense *The Ring and the Book* is dramatic — a vast drama in monologues, assuring us that there is redress for the wronged beautiful things of life.

Later Years. — Among the later poems is *Hervé Riel* (1871), the fine story of a Breton sailor who saved the French fleet from the British (1692) by steering it through a narrow passage among the rocks, where the British could not follow.

> See the noble fellow's face
> As the big ship, with a bound,
> Clears the entry like a hound,
> Keeps the passage as its inch of way were the wide sea's profound!
> See, safe thro' shoal and rock,
> How they follow in a flock.

Another familiar poem is *Pheidippides* (1879), named after its hero, who is mentioned by Herodotus, the Greek historian. The courageous long-distance runner was sent from Athens to Sparta (490 B.C.) in order to ask help when the Persians invaded Greece.

"Greet the unseen with a cheer" is Browning's advice in the epilogue to *Asolando* (1889). At Venice a few weeks

later, on the twelfth of December, 1889, the brave spirit passed cheerily into the unseen world. His remains were placed in Westminster Abbey. In the words of the epilogue, there rests —

> One who never turned his back but marched breast forward,
> Never doubted clouds would break,
> Never dreamed, tho' right were worsted, wrong would triumph.

Browning's Place in Literature. — Browning was the greatest realistic poet of the Victorian period; that is to say,



By J. G. Pinwell

FIG. 125. — "After him the children pressed." *The Pied Piper.*

he had a keen sense of fact and presented accurate views of real life. He was seldom interested in nature for its own sake, as were Wordsworth, Shelley, and Tennyson. His chief interest lay in human nature, because, like Pope, he believed that "the proper study of mankind is man."

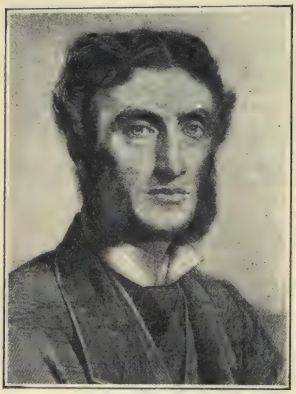
More than any of his predecessors, Browning employed a variety of metres, believing that the measure should harmonize with the thought of the poem. In his insistence upon

the rights of each individual he was democratic, and he carried his idea so far that at times he leaves his readers rather puzzled. He was a rapid thinker and often swept aside the relative pronouns, conjunctions, and other useful little links of speech, in the rush with which he poured forth his ideas.

No doubt some of Browning's poems are hard to understand, and yet many are simple enough, such as *The Italian in England* and *Instans Tyrannus*. Even a child can enjoy *The Pied Piper* (1842). Browning will be remembered for many poems that give a clear message of courage and happiness to mankind, a message like that in *Rabbi Ben Ezra:*

All I could never be,
All, men ignored in me,
This, I was worth to God.

Matthew Arnold (1822–1888)



From portrait by P. Sandys

Matthew Arnold.

Fig. 126. — Matthew Arnold.

Almost every one has heard of *Tom Brown's Schooldays*, which was written by **Thomas Hughes** (1823–1896). Tom Brown is a clean, manly fellow with whom it is good to become acquainted. He attended Rugby at a time when its Head Master was the famous Dr. Thomas Arnold, father of Matthew Arnold, the poet and critic.

Matthew Arnold was born at Laleham, Middlesex, in 1822. He was an excellent student at Balliol College, Oxford. In 1851 he became an Inspector of

Schools, a position which he held until three years before his death. His was a most arduous life, involving the correction of thousands of examination papers. He wrote his poems when he had a little leisure in the evening.

Poetic Works. — Arnold was a good classical scholar, and all his literary work has the clearness and dignity that belong to ancient Greek poetry. His poetry is different in tone from his prose, each showing him in distinct moods. With the exception of verses such as *Kaiser's Dead* (1887), a humorous poem whose style imitates that of Burns, Arnold's poems are inclined to be pensive.

His first verses were *The Strayed Reveller and Other Poems* (1849). This collection includes *The Forsaken Merman*, a poem based upon a legend that deals with the mystery and the lure of the ocean. Arnold's romantic poem is an account of a mortal woman who lives for a time down in the sea-caverns, but one day she forsakes the merman. Observe the simple diction and the lofty imagination of lines such as —

> Children dear, was it yesterday
> We heard the sweet bells over the bay?
> In the caverns where we lay,
> Through the surf and through the swell,
> The far-off sounds of a silver bell?
> Sand-strewn caverns, cool and deep,
> Where the winds are all asleep.

Arnold venerated Oxford, and, like Gray, he is, to a certain extent, a college poet, though his poems are always easy to understand. In *The Scholar Gipsy* with pleasing dignity the poet tells of one who, among a primitive people, sought refuge from the petty annoyances of civilization. *Thyrsis* is an elegy on the poet's old college friend and brother-poet, Arthur Hugh Clough (1819–1861). It is not unworthy of comparison with Milton's *Lycidas* and Shelley's *Adonais*.

Sohrab and Rustum. — Among the best of Arnold's poems are *Sohrab and Rustum* (1853), *Balder Dead* (1855), and *Dover Beach* (1867).

The first is based upon a story in the Persian epic *Shah Nameh* (Book of Kings). Rustum is a hero of Persian legend. In Arnold's *Sohrab and Rustum* the opening scene shows Sohrab in the early morning passing through the Tartars' camp, which is beside the river Oxus in Turkestan, east of the Caspian Sea. Sohrab suggests to his commander that he be allowed to challenge any champion of the enemy, the Persians. He has been looking for his father, Rustum, whom he has never seen, nor does the father know that he has a son. Indeed, Rustum has been informed that it was a daughter that was born to him. When the champions meet, Rustum feels sorry for the young stranger with whom he is to fight, and urges him to leave the other army and become his adopted son. Sohrab's answer is —



FIG. 127. — Dover Beach and Cliffs.

> I am young —
> But yet success sways with the breath of Heaven,
> And though thou thinkest that thou knowest sure
> Thy victory, yet thou canst not surely know,
> For we are all, like swimmers in the sea,
> Poised on the top of a huge wave of fate,
> Which hangs uncertain to which side to fall.
> And whether it will heave us up to land,
> Or whether it will roll us out to sea,
> Back out to sea, to the deep waves of death,
> We know not. — 386–396.

The rest of the story may be learned by reading the poem. With its epic dignity and its lyric passion it is Arnold's finest poetic production.

Balder Dead. — Arnold was patriotic, but his patriotism was like that of Scott and Browning. He had too much common sense to believe that all good things are to be found in any one country. Gray was the first noted poet who took an interest in the Old Norse myths, and Scott more than once wrote about Norse valor on sea and land. Arnold, a man who enjoyed the strong literature of any country, was also attracted to Icelandic or Old Norse traditions. His *Balder Dead* relates the story of Balder, who was the son of Odin and god of the summer sunlight. This original poem, revealing the gentler phase of the Northland, has a message for our present civilization. Balder says to his brothers that there is —

> In your life
> Something too much of war and broils, which make
> Life one perpetual fight, a bath of blood.
> Mine eyes are dizzy with the arrowy hail;
> Mine ears are stunn'd with blows, and sick for calm.
> — *Funeral*, Section III, 504.

Prose Works. — Arnold believed that poetry should be "a criticism of life"; that is, it should present the real meaning of man's life upon earth. From 1857 to 1867 he was Professor of Poetry at Oxford, and there it was that he delivered his *Lectures on Translating Homer* (1861). The volume entitled *Essays in Criticism* (1865, 1888) suggests that "We have to turn to poetry to interpret life for us." According to Arnold, culture means "setting ourselves to ascertain what perfection is and to make it prevail."

Among other notable prose works are *Celtic Literature* (1867), *Culture and Anarchy* (1869), and *Discourses in*

America (1885). Arnold's poetry is usually serious, whereas in his beautiful prose he sometimes utters the opposite of what he means. In other words, his humor takes the form of irony. Even when we cannot agree with his opinions, he is always attractive and instructive by reason of the clearness and distinction of his style.

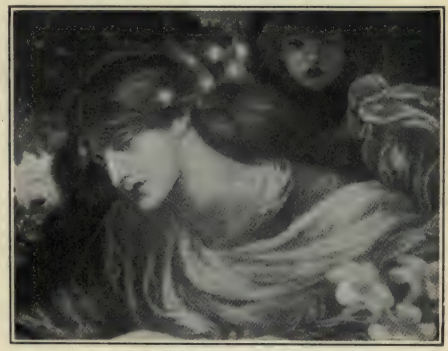
Arnold's Place in Literature. — Arnold was undoubtedly the most eminent literary critic of his age. His poetry has lucidity, serene dignity, and beauty of diction wedded to real thought. In order to understand either his verse or his prose, we need to remember that, about the middle of the Victorian period, many good people were troubled because of the apparent conflict between science and religion. Charles Darwin's *Origin of Species* (1859) caused much discussion. These discussions for a time brought doubt to Tennyson and Arnold, while they merely confirmed the joyous hopefulness that gleams in Browning's poetry. Arnold's works will always be a valuable index to the tone of English thought during the third quarter of the nineteenth century.

Dante Gabriel Rossetti (1828–1882)

The Pre-Raphaelite Movement. — In 1848 a number of artists met in London, and founded what they termed the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood. They were not opposed to Raphael, the great Italian artist. They simply wished to make art more natural, more sincere, and they believed they could achieve this result by reviving the freedom which they observed in Raphael's predecessors. In an age of religious doubt one of their aims was to depict the reverence and awe which inspire medieval painting. Many critics jeered at the ideas of these young painters until Ruskin, the noted art critic, came to their defence in his

Pre-Raphaelitism (1851). The term Pre-Raphaelitism was extended from painting to literature, where it represents a phase of the romantic element in literature. One of the founders of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood was a young poet and painter named Rossetti. He and two other painters, William Holman Hunt and John Millais, were the first to reveal the aims of the new movement through their pictures.

Dante Gabriel Rossetti, whose Italian father enjoyed the study of Dante, was born at London in 1828. Even in childhood he liked to read Dante, to write verses, and to draw. He became a student of painting, attaining distinction by the originality of his designs and the naturalness of his coloring. He chose his themes from religion and romance. His paintings were those of a poet, and his poems those of a painter. The pictorial style marks all his writings.



Detail from the painting by Dante Gabriel Rossetti

FIG. 128. — The Blessed Damozel.

In his eighteenth year *The Blessed Damozel* was printed. Poe's *The Raven* (1845), the familiar American poem, treats of the sorrow of the bereaved lover on earth, whereas Rossetti portrays in simple pictorial language the longing of the loved one in heaven. The damsel looks down from the golden barrier of the heavenly city. Ten years have passed since she left the earth, and she waits to meet the lover and teach him holy songs. She waits in vain —

And then she cast her arms along
The golden barriers,
And laid her face between her hands,
And wept.

Lyric and Narrative Poems. — *The Early Italian Poets* (1861) shows Rossetti's power as a translator. Next came *Poems* (1870) followed by *Ballads and Sonnets* (1881).

The lyric group includes *The House of Life,* a title borrowed from astrology. It is a series of a hundred and one sonnets wherein life is interpreted in terms of love. They reveal a new type of word-music, and a style that suggests to some readers either Blake or Keats.

The narrative poems are largely imitations of old ballads, though they lack the plainness of the real traditional ballad. They possess color, passion, and mystery. Perhaps the finest is *The King's Tragedy,* a poem which describes the splendid heroism of Catherine Douglas, the maiden who used her arm as a bolt, and suffered it to be broken in order to give James I of Scotland (author of the *Kingis Quair*) a chance to escape from assassins. Other notable ballads are *The White Ship* and *The Staff and Scrip.*

Though the amount of Rossetti's poetry is not great, it is conspicuous for its sense of form and its power of vision.

Christina Rossetti (1830–1894)

It was in 1862 that Christina Rossetti, the sister of the poet Rossetti, published in irregular rimed lines *Goblin Market and Other Poems.* The poem named is a narrative of the love of two sisters residing in the country. It is a sort of fairy tale.

Miss Rossetti's religious poems have sincerity and beauty of form. It is mainly in her sense of form that she is superior to Mrs. Browning. In the series of fourteen sonnets,

Monna Innominata (Lady Unnamed), is revealed a subtle interpretation of the inner life. A clear vision of the unseen, a high seriousness, a haunting beauty, are among the qualities of this gifted poetess. At the close of the eleventh sonnet she says much in two lines —

> I charge you at the Judgment make it plain
> My love of you was life and not a breath.

William Morris (1834–1896)

Another of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood was William Morris, who was born at Walthamstow, near London, in 1834. While a student at Oxford his romantic tendency was seen in his friendship with Sir Edward Burne Jones, who brought back to painting some of the tenderness and spirituality of Botticelli. Visits to France filled Morris with admiration of medieval architecture. Under Rossetti's influence he "sought to reach through Art the forgotten world of old romance."

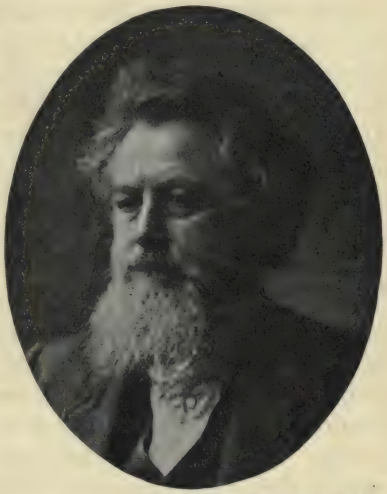


Photo by Elliot and Fry

Fig. 129. — William Morris.

In his twenty-fourth year he published *The Defence of Guenevere and Other Poems.* Responsive both to color and to sound, these poems portray the aspiration of their author. The eerie element in them reminds us at times of Shelley. Among the more notable crea-

tions are *The Haystack in the Floods*, *The Sailing of the Sword*, and *The Blue Closet*, the last of which was written to interpret a water-color painting by Rossetti. In this stanza of *The Sailing of the Sword*, notice the ballad style as modified first by Rossetti:

O, russet brown and scarlet bright,
When the Sword went out to sea,
My sisters wore; I wore but white;
Red, brown, and white are three;
Three damozels; each had a knight,
When the Sword went out to sea.

Decorative Art. — Morris employed his deep insight into the past in order to meet the actual needs of the present. He tried to beautify modern life by enriching poetry with the romantic atmosphere of bygone days. He worked with his own hands as a designer, putting his heart into his work and producing objects which no machine can ever duplicate. In 1861 he opened a shop in London for the sale of decorative art — artistic wall-paper, furniture, stained glass, etc. His aim was to transform English homes by making them more like the beautiful past. He started the Kelmscott press in order to reform modern printing. He introduced the idea of putting beautiful thoughts into beautiful books. It is the influence of Morris that has transformed so many school-rooms, creating a desire for harmonious color on walls and ceiling, and bringing home the need for noble pictures rather than bare prison-like walls. His influence in household art, in school improvement, in literary art, has reached most parts of Europe and America.

The Earthly Paradise. — It was in 1866 that Morris published *The Life and Death of Jason*, wherein he relates the old Greek story of the Golden Fleece. It is told in the manner of Chaucer, imitating his spirit as well as his versi-

fication. It is less favorably known than the volumes of *The Earthly Paradise* (1868–1870), the purpose of which is stated thus:

> Folk say, a wizard to a northern king
> At Christmas-tide such wondrous things did show,
> That through one window men beheld the spring,
> And through another saw the summer glow,
> And through a third the fruited vines a-row,
> While still, unheard, but in its wonted way,
> Piped the drear wind of that December day.
>
> So with this Earthly Paradise it is,
> If ye will read aright.

Sigurd the Volsung. — The poets Gray, Scott, and Arnold had been attracted by Old Norse or Icelandic stories or sagas, but Morris had a deeper interest in Iceland than any of his predecessors. *Sigurd the Volsung* (1877) is a poem of more than nine thousand lines. It presents the legend of Sigurd, the grandson of King Volsung, who was supposed to be a descendant of Odin, the chief god of Norse mythology. Sigurd is the lover of Brynhild, and both endure many trials.

Later Years. — Besides translations Morris published *Poems by the Way* (1891), presenting pictures of the life of his own time. The poet in his later years became dissatisfied with the luxury and the poverty of modern society, and he became a social reformer. His *Poems by the Way* is a volume that sympathizes with the toiling masses.

Morris was the most versatile of the Pre-Raphaelite poets. Long poems were not so much appreciated during the Victorian period as in earlier times, and the poet is not always as clear as modern taste demands. He will long be remembered for his ennobling influence upon art in general.

Alfred Austin (1835–1913)

If e'er in my verse lurks tender thought,
'Twas borrowed from cushat (dove) or blackbird's throat;
If sweetness any, 'twas culled or caught
From boughs that blossom and clouds that float.

This is a stanza from Austin's prelude to *Soliloquies in Song*. Alfred Austin was born at Headingly, near Leeds. He took his degree at the University of London in 1853, and two years later he was called to the bar. He cared little for legal studies and published his first volume of verse, *The Season*, in 1861. Among many volumes may be named *The Golden Age* (1871), *Madonna's Child* (1873), and *Savonarola* (1881), a tragedy.

As a poet Austin's chief characteristics are love of country and love of the country. Patriotism is a prevailing note in much of his verse. In the sonnet, *Written in Mid-Channel*, he enjoys the sleet of a March day after being in sunny Italy —

And, gazing through the mist with misty eyes,
Blesses the brave bleak land where he was born.

In 1896, four years after Tennyson's death, Austin became poet laureate, a position which he held for seventeen years.

Algernon Charles Swinburne (1837–1909)

Algernon Charles Swinburne, son of Admiral Swinburne, was a Londoner. From Eton he went in 1856 to Balliol College, Oxford, where he was an associate of the gifted John Nichol, who later became Professor of English Literature at the University of Glasgow. Among his college friends were Rossetti and Morris, the two other Pre-Raphaelite poets. In 1861 he was in Italy, where he visited Landor the essayist.

The Dramas. — Swinburne's first volume of verse contained two tragedies, *The Queen Mother* (Catherine de Medici), and *Rosamond* (1860). These, along with *Chastelard* (1865), *Bothwell* (1874), and *Mary Stuart* (1881), constitute his romantic dramas. Swinburne was influenced greatly by the methods of Victor Hugo, the French novelist and dramatist. The last three plays form a trilogy, that is, three dramas presenting different phases of one historical picture. Most readers are careful not to accept Swinburne's plays as true to history. Neither Mary Stuart, Queen of Scots, nor Mary Beaton was in love with Chastelard, the French poet, so that these and other errors convey a wrong impression of the history of the sixteenth century.

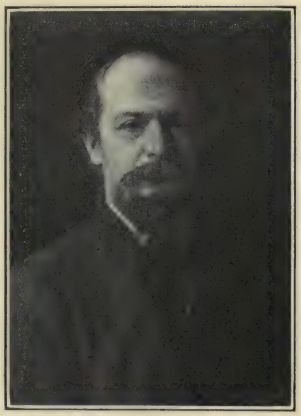


FIG. 130. — Algernon Charles Swinburne.



From a painting

FIG. 131. — Mary, Queen of Scots.

Swinburne's *Atalanta in Calydon* (1865) and *Erectheus* (1876) are dramas of classical rather than romantic type. Their author was an accomplished Greek scholar, and this partly accounts for his admiration of Greek ideals such as attention to

artistic form. *Atalanta,* however, like most of his other dramas, is too long; also it is too impassioned, too hostile to religion, to convey the serenity of ancient drama. Better known than any of his other dramas, it shows great variety and originality of rhythm, especially in the splendor of the choruses. The blank verse is truly harmonious. These dramas are not for playgoers, but for readers.

Lyric and Narrative Verse. — The magic, the pulse, the passion of music, are in Swinburne's choicest lyrics, and more or less in all his verse, yet too often he lacks the spiritual fire which glows in poetry that is supreme. He may be compared with Byron as a master singer of the sea and of childhood. In a *Forsaken Garden* (1876) he tells that —

> Here there was laughing of old, there was weeping,
> Haply, of lovers none ever will know,
> Whose eyes went seaward a hundred sleeping years ago.

Tristram of Lyonesse (1882) is the best of his narrative poems.

Prose Writing. — Swinburne, as his prose works show, had an excellent knowledge of literature, but his impulsiveness at times led him to be imprudent in speech. Had he been able to cultivate a sense of humor, his occasional poor taste in both verse and prose might not have marred the reader's pleasure. He was inclined to look on the dark side of life. *Essays and Studies* (1875) and *The Age of Shakespeare* (1908) give a clear idea of his powers and limits as a critic. Swinburne received the Nobel prize in 1908, the year before his death. It is the best of his melodious lyrics that entitle him to a place of honor in literary history.

John Davidson (1857–1909)

John Davidson, a Scotsman from Renfrewshire, was a schoolmaster, in early life, with a taste for chemistry. In 1890 he gave up teaching in order to become a journalist and a man of letters. His earliest work, *An Unhistorical Pastoral* (1877), was published at Glasgow. Davidson's *Bruce* (1884) and *Smith* (1886) are to some extent imitations of Shakespeare. The poet knew little about the needs of the stage, yet these plays reveal wit and imagination. Hallowes, one of the characters in *Smith,* seems to be something like Davidson himself, as he explains:

> Give me to dream dreams all would love to dream:
> To tell the world's truth; hear the world tramp time
> With satin slippers and with hob-nailed shoes
> To my true singing; fame is worth its cost,
> Blood-sweats, and tears, and haggard homeless lives.[1]

Davidson's work as a poet is unequal. Like Arnold and Swinburne, he lost interest in some of the beliefs of his childhood, one of the effects produced by the conflict between scientific theorists and the defenders of religious faith. Among Davidson's books of poetry may be mentioned *Ballads and Songs* (1894), *New Ballads* (1897), and *The Last Ballad and Other Poems* (1899). These and his *Fleet Street Eclogues* (1893) comprise most of his best work. The diction is rich and vital, and the style is clear and vigorous, although occasionally the metre is rugged. Sometimes downcast, partly by reason of poverty and poor health, Davidson in the introduction to *New Ballads* gives a clew to his own nature:

> Some said, "He was strong." He was weak;
> For he never could sing or speak

[1] By permission of John Lane Company.

Of the things beneath or the things above,
Till his soul was touched by death or love.

Some said, "He was weak." They were wrong;
For the soul must be strong
That can break into song
Of the things beneath and the things above,
At the stroke of death, at the touch of love.[1]

Francis Thompson (1860–1907)

Francis Thompson, whose father in vain urged him to study for the church, was a native of Preston. After spending his youth in Lancashire, he settled in London, where, like Davidson, he endured for a time the bitterness of extreme poverty. He resembled Blake in being a mystic, a man of visions. For instance, in his celebrated *Hound of Heaven* (1893), a poem based upon *Psalm* cxxxix. 7–10, the introductory lines declare —

I fled Him, down the nights and down the days;
I fled Him, down the arches of the years;
I fled Him, down the labyrinthine ways
Of my own mind, and in the mist of tears
I hid from Him.[1]

Thompson appeals largely to those who love poetry for its own sake, for its imagery and its splendid diction, and in the fine prose of his essays he often shows that discernment and sense of reality which we expect in a competent critic. Unusual words, unusual uses of words, sometimes mar the enjoyment of his word-music. One of his volumes is *Sister Songs* (1895). Toward the uncanny close of *A Foretelling of the Child's Husband* in *Sister Songs*, Thompson writes —

I have caught you fast for ever in a tangle of sweet rhymes.
And in your young maiden morn
You may scorn.[1]

[1] By permission of John Lane Company.

2. *PROSE WRITERS*

Thomas Carlyle (1795–1881)

In its grimness, in its frequent appearance of gravity, the humor of certain parts of Scotland resembles that of Norway rather than England. "One of the saddest of all the sons of Adam," Carlyle calls himself, and yet if we fail to see that he is at times a humorist, we shall scarcely appreciate certain passages of his writings. Alluding to his own family tree, he gravely explains that one of his ancestors was hanged for cattle-stealing, "my remotest outlook into the past." Again, he says that his father, who was a stonemason and farmer, "walked as a man in the presence of heaven, and hell, and the judgment," especially the two latter.



From the painting by Whistler, Glasgow Art Galleries

Thomas Carlyle

Fig. 132. — Thomas Carlyle.

It is a peculiar humor that underlies his spells of gloom. The reader, who may here and there see sympathy under his sarcasm, will also find tenderness at the root of his indignation. His sardonic laughter was at times but another form of weeping, the outcome of that humor without whose kindly relief men of strong moral earnestness would find life's follies rather burdensome.

In 1795 Thomas Carlyle was born at Ecclefechan, sixteen miles from Dumfries, the town which witnessed Burns's death the following year. After attending school at Annan, young Carlyle went to the University of Edinburgh. He became especially proficient in mathematics, and also became a victim of chronic dyspepsia, an ailment which tended to make him irritable. For a while he was a teacher, and all the time he was steadily working out for himself the religious problems for which he sought solution. His parents had destined him for the church, but he preferred literature.



The upper window on the right belongs to the room in which Carlyle was born

FIG. 133. — Birthplace of Carlyle.

Interest in German Literature. — Among Carlyle's earlier works were a translation of Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister* (1824) and a *Life of Schiller* (1825). Other works relating to Germany appeared later. It was Carlyle who first interpreted the literature of Germany to the people of Britain. No doubt Coleridge, Scott, and Shelley had published translations, but they made little impression. Even Francis Jeffrey, the accomplished editor of the *Edinburgh Review*, did not realize that Germany possessed the most spiritual literature in modern Europe. Goethe, however, was quick to recognize that this young Scotsman would do full justice to the Fatherland. When clouds of religious doubt had darkened the sky, Carlyle found solace and satisfaction in German thought, and more than once he expressed his gratitude.

Carlyle's Insight. — In 1826 Carlyle married Jane Welsh, the brilliant daughter of a surgeon in Haddington. They

retired to Craigenputtock, a small Dumfriesshire estate nestling among trees in the Galloway moors, far from the roar of the busy world that lies beyond the swelling hills of granite. There in 1833 he was visited by Emerson, the distinguished essayist and poet, who made Carlyle known to Americans. In this lonely farm, fifteen miles from the spot where Burns's remains are lying, Carlyle wrote his well-known *Essay on Burns* (1828). This essay is of interest because (1) it is written in a simpler style than most of the later works, (2) it is an estimate of one great writer by another, (3) Carlyle, like Burns, possessed sincerity and the ability to see under life's surface from the angle that was made for him by training and temperament.

In a private journal kept by Carlyle at Craigenputtock in 1829, we find him writing — "Without love there is no knowledge." This sentence lays bare the motive-power which helped to give its writer a commanding place in English literature. He found something to esteem in characters as diverse as Mahomet and Napoleon. It was he who first rendered justice to Boswell, the biographer of Johnson, and he presented Oliver Cromwell in a new light to the world's readers.

Sartor Resartus. — An original treatment of a quaint subject is *Sartor Resartus* (The Tailor Repatched), which professes to be a philosophy or explanation of clothes. It first appeared as a series of articles in *Fraser's Magazine* (1833–1834). Carlyle is opposed to the old clothes of sham and falsehood that conceal a divine idea. With grim humor and earnestness he teaches that nature is the garment behind which is God. It is not fine raiment or outward show that makes a man, but high character and love of truth. The hero is supposed to be a German professor, but the book is really an account of Carlyle's own experiences, written in an emphatic racy style.

In the chapter entitled "The Everlasting Yea," Carlyle writes: "Love not pleasure; love God. This is the Everlasting Yea." In the same chapter he says:

> Do the Duty which lies nearest thee, which thou knowest to be a Duty! Thy second Duty will already have become clearer. . . . The situation that has not its Duty, its Ideal, was never yet occupied by man. . . . Fool! the Ideal is in thyself; the impediment too is in thyself.

The French Revolution. — After six years at Craigenputtock Carlyle in 1834 went to London. He lived at

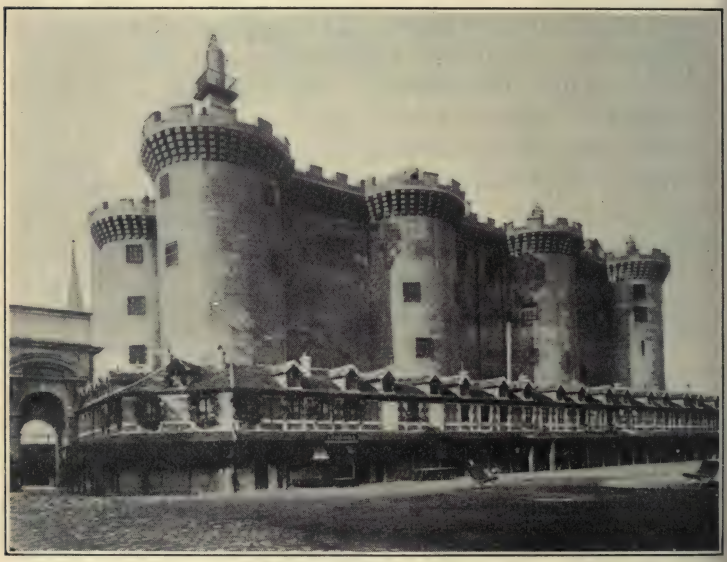


FIG. 134. — The Bastile.

Cheyne Row, Chelsea, until his death. He lent the manuscript of *The French Revolution* to his friend John Stuart Mill, the famous philosopher, and Mill in turn lent it to a lady

whose cook seems to have used it to light the fire. Carlyle worked for another year with untiring energy in an effort to reproduce the lost manuscript. Finally *The French Revolution* (1837) appeared and dazzled its readers. Thackeray, Dickens, and other men praised it highly.

The author does not scruple to flash out sudden bursts of laughter or bitter scorn or tenderest pathos, according to his theme and his mood. He takes the word or phrase that will best serve his turn, no matter whence it comes, and as his soul rises in tumult at that tale of blood and tears, he sometimes lets the parts of speech take care of themselves. Like a series of pictures in a thrilling photo-play, the scenes lay hold of his readers with a grasp there is no resisting. His vivid imagination penetrates through dusty documents, making the dead to live and act again. Once more in his fiery pages we behold the storming of the Bastile, the march of the Paris women to Versailles, the last gallant fight of the Swiss guards, and the stately figure of the doomed queen. The book has the atmosphere of romance, and yet later research has shown that it is reasonably accurate in detail. In the chapter entitled " Marie Antoinette " are these words :

> At four o'clock on Wednesday morning (October 14, 1793), after two days and two nights of interrogating, jury-charging, and other darkening of counsel, the result comes out : sentence of Death. " Have you anything to say ? " The Accused shook her head, without speech. Night's candles are burning out; and with her too Time is finishing, and it will be Eternity and Day. This hall of Tinville's is dark, ill-lighted except where she stands. Silently she withdraws from it, to die. . . . At eleven, Marie-Antoinette was brought out. She was led to the place of execution, in the same manner as an ordinary criminal; bound, on a Cart. . . . She mounted the Scaffold with courage enough; at a quarter past Twelve, her head fell.

Heroes and Hero-Worship. — Among the many volumes — historical, literary, political, and moral — produced by

Carlyle, one of the most popular is *Heroes and Hero-Worship* (1841), in which he declares that "the greatest of faults is to be conscious of none." In this book he takes Dante, Shakespeare, and other noted men to illustrate his theory that "the history of the world is but the Biography of great men." This doctrine underlies his three historical works, *The French Revolution, Oliver Cromwell* (1845), and *The History of Frederick the Great* (1858–1865), one of the most brilliant histories ever written.

Heroes or great men have appeared as prophets, poets, priests, men of letters, and kings. Heroes are thinkers as well as men of action. They are men who show others what should be done, and guide them toward human progress. In other words, Carlyle was not, like Morris, a socialist, but an individualist. All readers may not agree with him in either his choice or his treatment of the men discussed in his book.

Later Years. — In 1839 Carlyle had published *Critical and Miscellaneous Essays*, including the essay on Burns. *Past and Present* (1843) shows its author's strong sympathy with artisans and laborers. He asks justice rather than charity for the toilers of Britain. *The Life of John Sterling* (1851) is an able and kindly account of the friend that had introduced Carlyle to the lady who became his wife.

The year 1866 burned itself into the brain of the venerable author. The students of the University of Edinburgh elected him as Lord Rector, an honor which he greatly appreciated. He had gone north to Edinburgh to deliver the inaugural address, whose touching eloquence brought tears to the eyes of many of the audience. Soon afterward a telegram announced that his wife had died in London. For the old man the sun never again shone with real radiance. He tried to forget his loneliness by working at his *Reminiscences* (1881), in which he tells with deep emotion of the

wife whom he had loved. A pension and other honors Carlyle courteously declined. Death overtook him in Chelsea on February 5, 1881. England would have honored him with a resting-place in Westminster Abbey, but, in deference to his dying wishes, his remains were laid beside those of his parents in Ecclefechan kirkyard.

Carlyle as a Teacher. — Carlyle certainly set his mark on the moral and intellectual history of the Victorian period. He belonged to a race conspicuous for independence, fighting spirit, and instinctive consideration of men merely as men. By his own simple life he taught men of letters to be independent of circumstances. He had a stern contempt for "the terror of not succeeding." He was human, and therefore he made mistakes. Occasionally he lacked the sweetness of tolerance. If at times he showed impatience and anger, he said much worse things of himself than he ever said of other men. Never satisfied with his literary performances, he had to find new work for his busy brain. We may say with truth of him what he said of Schiller — "The primary disposition of his nature urged him to perpetual toil."

No writer of the Victorian period dealt such fatal blows at religious doubt and atheism. His vision was deep rather than broad. From the very outset down to the last hour of his long laborious life he was on fire, not only to ascertain what he conceived to be true and right, but to have the right accomplished among his fellow-men. "His guiding genius," says Emerson, "is his moral sense, his perception of the sole importance of truth and justice."

Carlyle's Place in Literature. — Men of genius are nearly always in advance of their times. Carlyle's genius combined most of those elements which distinguish a man of high literary attainments — knowledge, reason, and an extraordinary gift of expression. Essentially a writer of

great native vigor, he reveals in all his works the same massiveness of proportion. To a rare degree he possessed the power of describing events so vividly that we could fancy that he had been an eye-witness. Rugged phrases leap forth here and there in a manner natural to their author. The style is such as to cause readers to see and to think, and those who continue to think will profit by Carlyle whether they accept or reject his striking utterances. In originality of thought and expression he has no superior among prose writers of the nineteenth century.

Thomas Babington, Lord Macaulay (1800–1859)

Macaulay's nephew, **Sir George Otto Trevelyan,** wrote the *Life and Letters of Lord Macaulay* (1876). It is one of the most readable of modern biographies, showing an intimate precise knowledge of Macaulay's character and achievements.



From a photograph by Claudet

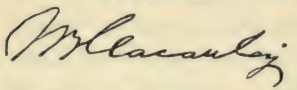


Fig. 135. — Lord Macaulay.

Thomas Babington Macaulay was born in 1800 at Rothley Temple, the Leicestershire home of his uncle, after whom he was named. At three he learned to read. Like so many other literary men in boyhood, he showed a strong liking for English composition, Scott being the author whom he was most anxious to imitate. At the age of nine he read Scott's *Lay of the Last Minstrel,* and was able to repeat the poem after a single reading. His astonishing memory was of great service in giving him

readiness in debate and richness in literary allusion. Thomas was also a rapid and varied reader, absorbing every book that caught his fancy. In 1818 he entered Trinity College, Cambridge, where he twice won first honors in the English prize-poem contest. For a short time he contributed articles to *Knight's Quarterly Magazine.*

Macaulay entered Parliament in 1830, and soon acquired a reputation as an orator, especially in the discussions connected with the introduction of the Reform Bill. In 1834, at a yearly salary of £10,000, he was sent to Calcutta, where he carried out reforms in the laws of India. After his return to England in 1839, Lord Melbourne, the prime minister, conferred upon him the post of secretary of war, which he held till 1841. The *Speech on Copyright* (1841) is a fair specimen of his animated style.

The Essays. — It was in 1825 that Macaulay wrote his first essay for the *Edinburgh Review*, the great Whig periodical to which he contributed for about twenty years. The first of the series was on Milton, an essay which at once gave its author a high literary reputation. Its appearance seemed to mark the rise of a new star of uncommon lustre above the horizon.

All the essays were collected in 1843 and published in three volumes. They belong to two classes, literary and historical. Among the most sympathetic of the literary essays are *Milton, Addison, Goldsmith,* and *Johnson.* Among the historical essays that take high rank are *Lord Clive,* the story of a former military leader in India (1725–1774), and *Warren Hastings,* which deals with the chief founder of the British empire in India (1732–1818). The essayist was well qualified to write about Clive and Hastings, because he had spent several years in India and was familiar with conditions in the East.

Macaulay has been assailed so often for his one-sidedness

that, so far as the essays are concerned, it is well to remember that he himself acknowledges, "Their life is only six weeks." In other words, he wrote them for entertainment rather than for serious instruction, and he achieved the purpose he had in view. As literature his essays are excellent reading; as literary criticism or serious biography we need to allow for what Macaulay perhaps could not avoid — prejudice, political or personal. He deals with events rather than causes. With pleasure we are borne along the rushing stream of his narrative, knowing well that its beauty conceals no deep pool in which we may have to struggle for breath. Macaulay's descriptions have all the detail and luminous charm of a Defoe, with a sparkle and vivacity unsurpassed in the Victorian period.

The Poems. — Macaulay's *Lays of Ancient Rome* (1842), *The Armada* (1848), *Ivry* (1848), and other poems have always been popular with juvenile readers. The *Lays* he wrote in a simple style, a style which he thought might resemble that of the old folk-songs of the Roman Republic. They have plenty of spirit.

The History. — Macaulay's *History of England,* the first volume of which appeared in 1848, is written without any pretence to impartiality. In his essay on Machiavelli he declares: "The best portraits are perhaps those in which there is a slight mixture of caricature, and we are not certain that the best histories are not those in which a little of the exaggeration of fictitious narrative is judiciously employed. Something is lost in accuracy, but much is gained in effect."

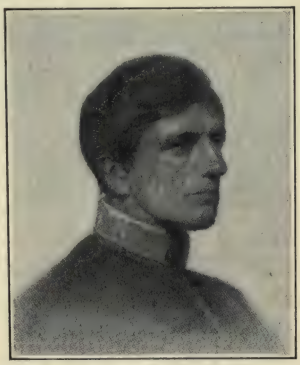
The *History* was to be an exposition of the period from 1685 to 1830, but in the five volumes Macaulay covered only sixteen years. The work is fascinating in its wealth of detail. The author gathered his material like a scientific historian, and he made use of it like a writer of romance. He was at work on the history when he was raised to the peerage in

1857. Two years later he died and was buried in Westminster Abbey. The fifth volume was published in 1861, subsequent to its author's death.

Macaulay's Place in Literature. — Macaulay was one of the most illustrious prose writers of the nineteenth century. He was never troubled, like Carlyle, about life's mysteries, nor did he worry about life's follies and failures. He had the power of making his story so clear to others, by repetition and by happy illustration, that his ideas are easy to comprehend. "I wish I could be as cocksure of anything as Macaulay is of everything," said his friend Lord Melbourne. The historian's exuberant imagination and never-failing self-confidence will always impart a sense of trustfulness to some of his readers. He deserves the highest credit for having developed a literary style of unusual dash and brilliance.

John Henry, Cardinal Newman (1801–1890)

John Henry Newman was born at England's capital. In 1816 he entered Trinity College, Oxford, and began to contribute articles to the *Encyclopædia Metropolitana*. In 1824 he was ordained, and four years later he was appointed Vicar of St. Mary's, Oxford. Finally Newman became leader of what was called the Oxford Movement, a phase of romanticism parallel to the Pre-Raphaelite movement.



From the drawing made in 1844 by George Richmond, R.A.

John H. Newman

Fig. 136. — John H. Newman.

It was an attempt to bring a deeper spirituality into public worship by restoring some of the ideas of medieval times. Its power lay mainly in the personality of its leader, whose sanctity of life was impressive.

Prose Works. — Besides religious works Newman wrote *The Idea of a University* (1852), which contains his fine description of what is meant when we call a man a gentleman. This passage may serve to indicate Newman's prose style.

> It is almost a definition of a gentleman to say he is one who never inflicts pain. This description is both refined and, as far as it goes, accurate. He is mainly occupied in merely removing the obstacles which hinder the free and unembarrassed action of those about him; and he concurs with their movements rather than takes the initiative himself. His benefits may be considered as parallel to what are called comforts or conveniences in arrangements of a personal nature: like an easy chair or a good fire, which do their part in dispelling cold and fatigue, though nature provides both means of rest and animal heat without them. The true gentleman in like manner carefully avoids whatever may cause a jar or a jolt in the minds of those with whom he is cast . . . his great concern being to make every one at their ease and at home.

The best of Newman's novels is *Callista* (1852), whose scene is laid in Africa. It is a story of the conflict between Christianity and Paganism in the third century. The *Apologia pro Vita Sua* (Defence of his own Life, 1864) is a religious autobiography, in which the author depicts his inner life.

Poems. — Among the poems of the scholarly Newman is *The Dream of Gerontius* (1866), which displays high imaginative power and deep spirituality. It endeavors to convey to its readers some idea of one whose soul is about to rise to possibilities greater than ever. Of all the lyrics none is nearly so popular as the touching and truly poetic hymn *Lead, Kindly Light.*

In 1879 Newman became a cardinal. Eleven years later

at Edgbaston the spirit of this saintly man winged its way into the unseen.

Newman's Place in Literature. — Newman ranks among the most thoughtful writers of the Victorian period. In argument he was as adroit as Macaulay; in moral earnestness he was not inferior to Carlyle. What is most admirable in the best of his prose and verse is his restraint, his breeding, his transparency.

William Makepeace Thackeray (1811–1863)

William Makepeace Thackeray was born of English parents at Calcutta. In his fifth year the child was sent from India to England. On the voyage the vessel touched at St. Helena, and the boy saw Napoleon in lonely exile. His attendant told him that Napoleon was an ogre — "he eats three sheep every day and all the children he can lay his hands on." When he left Charterhouse School, the lad in 1829 entered Trinity College, Cambridge.



From a portrait by Laurence, National Portrait Gallery

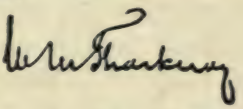


Fig. 137. — W. M. Thackeray.

Later Thackeray visited Germany and France. In 1832 he inherited a considerable fortune, which was soon lost through bad judgment. For a while he studied art in Paris. In 1836 he married Isabella Shawe. Soon he began to con-

tribute humorous sketches, verses, and short stories for the London comic paper *Punch* and for *Fraser's Magazine*. It was his work for *Punch*, both as a cartoonist and as a writer, that brought out his genius as a humorist. *Barry Lyndon* (1844) is the story of an Irish adventurer in the army of Frederick the Great. The *Book of Snobs* (1846) gives lively satirical sketches of club life in London. A collection of some of the papers which Thackeray had contributed to *Punch*, it is more or less like Fielding's *Jonathan Wild* in its attitude.

Earlier Popular Novels. — It was *Vanity Fair* (1847–1848), the best known of all Thackeray's novels, that first gave its author prominence in the world of letters. The title was borrowed from Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*. It is a satire on the shams that infest social life. Stronger in character drawing than in plot, the novel is largely a study of Becky (Rebecca) Sharp. Opposed to her is the pretty, though not too intelligent, Amelia Sedley. Among the male characters are Rawdon Crawley, the big dragoon, and the unselfish William Dobbin. Pictures of life in Brussels mingle with scenes in London. *Pendennis* (1849–1850) is another social satire, depicting Arthur Pendennis, who is represented as a typical young English gentleman.

Later Popular Novels. — Taking a hint from Scott's Waverley novels, Thackeray wrote *Henry Esmond* (1852), a historical novel that deals with the time of Queen Anne. In order to create the proper atmosphere, it is written in the literary language of the early eighteenth century. Steele, Addison, and others appear in the narrative. Colonel Esmond tells his own story. He has for years tried to win Beatrix Castlewood, and finally consoles himself by marrying her mother. Thackeray has taken liberties with history, but no one looks for accuracy except in serious history. The novel is realistic, and the plot is better con-

structed than that of any of the other novels. As a work of literary art it is superior to the more popular *Vanity Fair*.

Thackeray next wrote *The Newcomes* (1854–1855), which is a sequel to *Pendennis*. Colonel Newcome, who is Thackeray's ideal gentleman, is one of the most attractive characters in English prose fiction. Many people have wept over the death of the good Colonel. The fifth and last of the great novels is *The Virginians* (1857–1859), which is in some measure a sequel to *Esmond*. It shows us the Esmonds in America at the time of the American Revolution.

English Humorists. — Thackeray prepared *English Humourists of the Eighteenth Century* (published, 1853) as a series of six lectures, which he delivered in England in 1851, and in America in the winter of 1852–1853. An extract from the lecture on Addison may serve to illustrate Thackeray's gentler style.

> He must have been one of the finest gentlemen the world ever saw: at all moments of life serene and courteous, cheerful and calm. He could scarcely ever have had a degrading thought. He might have committed a virtue or two, or many, but could not have committed many faults for which he need blush or turn pale. When warmed into confidence, his conversation appears to have been so delightful that the greatest wits sat rapt and charmed to listen to him.

Later Years. — In the winter of 1855 at Rome, Thackeray, in order to please a few of his child friends, wrote *The Rose and the Ring*, which is a classic among children's stories. Hedzoff and the Countess Gruffanuff are among the characters. In *The Four Georges* (1860), which first appeared as public lectures in America and England, Thackeray makes some sarcastic comments upon the four English monarchs named George. The novelist died rather suddenly in 1863, on a bright wintry day, the last but one of the year. He was

laid in his grave at Kensal Green, Charles Dickens being chief mourner.

Thackeray's Place in English Literature. — Thackeray is one of the greatest writers of realistic prose fiction. He differs from some realistic novelists in that no man or woman was ever made the worse, but ofttimes a great deal better, by coming in contact with his creations. A disciple of Fielding, he did not scruple to show some of the disagreeable phases of human life. "I have no brains above my eyes," he acknowledged; "I describe what I see." In other words, he lacked the poetic imagination of Scott, the prince of prose romance.

Thackeray was not a cynic, a man-hater, even if his five great novels constitute a severe censure of certain types of people in comfortable circumstances. In spite of his sarcasm the author of *Vanity Fair* was in reality a kind-hearted man, who often laughed at social follies in order to forget the secret sorrows of his own life. He had to endure the sorrow of separation from his wife on account of her insanity. Like Carlyle, he denounced hypocrisy of every kind, but he did so because he believed that the lash of his irony would help to make society more noble. Thackeray himself was a real humorist, taking a particular delight in boys, tender even toward the rogues of his creation, as a rule generous in social intercourse with others. This side of his nature is well illustrated by the anecdote told at the Reform Club. There had been some unkind gossip about a member, recently deceased. "That's right," said Thackeray. "Kick him. Trample on him. He's dead."

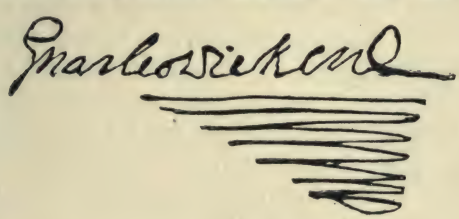
Though influenced by Fielding and the writers of the eighteenth century, Thackeray was no parrot. Even from childhood he had a pungent, clear style, free from affectation. Among his predecessors, Fielding and Scott are the only writers of prose fiction whose genius is fairly comparable with that of the creator of Colonel Newcome.

Charles Dickens (1812–1870)

Why do so many people like Dickens? Largely because he was the friend of the faithful teacher and the friend of youth. Scott and other writers have introduced teachers



Fig. 138. — Dickens in his study at Gad's Hill.



into their works, but Dickens was interested in schools to a greater degree than any of his predecessors. Nearly all his works have educational suggestions. Schoolmasters are leading characters in six of his novels — *Nicholas Nickleby*

(1838–1839), *The Old Curiosity Shop* (1840), *Dombey and Son* (1846–1848), *David Copperfield* (1849–1850), *Hard Times* (1854), and *Our Mutual Friend* (1864–1865). Squeers in the first of these novels is a distinct contrast to the unselfish schoolmaster who sheltered little Nell. The heart of Dickens throbbed in warm sympathy with the trials of the young. He tried to show the basis of true discipline, whether in the home or in the classroom.

Charles Dickens, a native of Portsmouth, was born the same year as Robert Browning. His early literary education came from his own thirst for knowledge. No one had to coax the boy to read. He found some old books in a cupboard, and soon he had eagerly read Smollett's novels and all other books he could find. On account of poverty, Charles had to leave school and work in a factory, while other lads were enjoying the help of their teachers. Nothing, however, can stop a boy with courage and perseverance. He had to wear shabby clothes and was often half starved, but his hardships made him all the more determined to fight and win in the battle of life. If he had not suffered as he did, he could never have written so intimately of the sorrows and temptations of poor people in a big city.

Once more Charles had a chance to attend school for a while, but in his fifteenth year he had to begin again to earn money. By day he was acting as clerk in a lawyer's office in London; by night he was studying shorthand. Soon he became a Parliamentary reporter for the *Morning Chronicle*. In his spare time he was writing sketches descriptive of London life. After they had appeared in the newspapers he published them in book form as *Sketches by Boz* (1836). Boz was a little sister's way of pronouncing Moses, the nickname that Dickens gave to a younger brother. He called him Moses after the lad mentioned in Goldsmith's *Vicar of Wakefield*.

Not Luck but Pluck. — Did Dickens whine about his hard struggle for existence? Certainly not. He was sensitive, yet he kept cheery because the angel of hope was beckoning him onward. Only 400 copies of the first part of *The Pickwick Papers* (1836–1837) were published on March 31, 1836, and before the appearance of the fourth number the publishers thought they might have to stop the issue, as the expenses were greater than the receipts. In the fifth number Dickens introduced Sam Weller, and this new character took the country by storm. The author created Sam Weller, the servant of Mr. Pickwick, from his knowledge of Samuel Vale. Vale, at that time a popular player in a farce, used queer comparisons like — "I am down upon you," as the extinguisher said to the rushlight; "Come on," as the man said to the tight boot.

The Pickwick Papers, which owes some of its charm to the work of the novelist Smollett, is a series of sketches showing the comic possibilities of life in London. The kind old bachelor Mr. Pickwick and his friends Snodgrass, Winkle, and Tupman are supposed to belong to a club, the members of which encounter some amusing difficulties. The shrewd and witty Sam Weller is inimitable.

Earlier Novels. — Dickens always found pleasure in hard work. *Oliver Twist* (1837–1838) is a rogue or picaresque story of the London slums. A workhouse boy becomes entangled with a gang of thieves led by Fagin, yet he escapes and becomes a decent citizen. "I wished to show in little Oliver," says Dickens, "the principle of the Good surviving through every adverse circumstance."

The next novel, *Nicholas Nickleby*, shows us Dotheboys (cheat the boys) Hall in Yorkshire, a private school badly managed by Mr. Squeers. The hero is finally helped by the Cheeryble brothers. Mrs. Nickleby in some respects resembles the novelist's mother.

Little Nell tries to save her bankrupt grandfather, the shop-keeper, from Quilp the dwarf, one of the creditors in *The Old Curiosity Shop*. Nell and her grandfather meet a delightful schoolmaster in the course of their adventures. This is one of the most popular of the novels.



Fig. 139. — Nell and her Grandfather.

A mysterious murder is told in *Barnaby Rudge* (1841), which is the first historical novel of Dickens. It deals partly with the riots of 1780, when the London mob set fire to Newgate prison.

Dickens had returned from a visit to America when he wrote *Martin Chuzzlewit* (1843). Its allusions to America indicate that the novelist must have had some annoying dreams. Pecksniff and Mrs. Gamp are the most original English characters in this work.

After a twelvemonth in Italy, Dickens went back to England to establish and edit *The Daily News*, but he soon returned to prose fiction. *Dombey and Son* shows how the pride of a merchant is humbled and his heart softened through suffering.

Later Novels. — The masterpiece of Dickens is *David Copperfield*, which is partly the story of its author's earlier career. Among its more notable characters are Mr. Micawber, Uriah Heep, Dr. Strong, Peggotty, and Betsey Trotwood. The first has one or two of the characteristics of the novelist's

father. The purpose of the story is to teach the value of sympathy, to warn against hypocrisy, and to insist that either good or evil is sure to bring a harvest for the sower. The plot is better constructed than that of its predecessors. The following extract indicates the style:

> I now write of the time when I had been married, I suppose, about a year and a half. After several varieties of experiment, we had given up the housekeeping as a bad job. The house kept itself, and we kept a page. The principal function of this retainer was to quarrel with the cook. . . . We wanted to get rid of him, but he was very much attached to us, and wouldn't go. He was a tearful boy.

In *Bleak House* (1852–1853) is an account of what sometimes happens to the people that are involved in the delays of courts of law. *Hard Times* deals with labor troubles; *Little Dorrit* (1855–1857) attacks the system whereby debtors were kept in prison; *A Tale of Two Cities* (1859) shows Paris and London at the time of the French Revolution. Some critics regard this as the most artistic of all these novels. *Great Expectations* (1861), warning its readers against ingratitude, has a plot of uncommon unity. It deals with the return of a convict. *Our Mutual Friend* at the outset shows us a hook-nosed man and his daughter engaged in strange work on the river Thames. As in all the other works there is a blend of fun and pathos.

Christmas Books. — Dickens wrote some charming tales of Christmas, namely, *The Christmas Carol* (1843), *The Chimes* (1844), *The Cricket on the Hearth* (1845), *The Battle of Life* (1846), and *The Haunted Man and the Ghost's Bargain* (1848). Instead of the usual doleful ghost stories, Dickens mingled the supernatural element with a kindly humor. The first of his Christmas books is perhaps the most popular of the world's ghost stories.

Later Years. — Dickens had worked hard all his life. He

fatigued himself giving readings in America (1868) and elsewhere, and he was conducting a periodical known as *All the Year Round*. He was writing *Edwin Drood* (1869–1870), when he died at Gad's Hill, near Rochester, in 1870. He was laid to rest in Westminster Abbey.



FIG. 140. — Gad's Hill.

Dickens's Place in Literature. — During the Victorian period Dickens was the best-known writer of prose fiction, as was Scott during the romantic period. More than any Victorian writer he lays stress upon physiognomy; that is, he believes that to some extent the face is an index of the soul. He may indulge in caricature in some of his character sketches, yet there is a high purpose underlying all his mirth. In his judgment the plainest face and the homeliest manner may cover a noble intellect and a heart beating with love for mankind.

Most of Thackeray's characters are people in comfortable circumstances; most of the characters of Dickens are persons in the humbler walks of life. As compared with Thackeray, he is not a polished writer of English prose. Most of his works Dickens wrote in a hurry. The result is that the incidents of his stories do not always seem closely related to each other. Highly colored as are some of his pictures, yet they are never degrading in their tendency.

No man ever had a keener appreciation of a comic situation. All admit his alert sense of humor, though at times the pathos may be overdrawn. Dickens created many new types of mankind. The world which he depicted may not be a photograph of life as it is, yet it is life as seen through the shrewd eyes of a man who had not lost confidence in human nature. As a purveyor of innocent fun, as one who appeals to the better side of human nature, Dickens ranks among the masters of English prose fiction.

Humanitarian Novelists

Humanitarian novelists are those who employ the art of prose fiction for improving the social welfare of humanity, especially of those who do not enjoy many of life's comforts. Dickens was the greatest of the humanitarian novelists, but he was not alone. **Benjamin Disraeli** (1804–1881) in his *Sybil* (1845) gives an account of the condition of English workmen after the riots of 1839.

Mrs. Elizabeth Gaskell (1810–1865) in *Cranford* (1853) furnishes interesting pictures of a quiet English village. Her *Mary Barton* (1848) and *North and South* (1855) treat of the labor problem in a most pleasing manner.

Charles Reade (1814–1874) is at times a disciple of Dickens. In his *Never Too Late to Mend* (1856) he presents a study of the hardships of prisoners. His masterpiece, however,

is *The Cloister and the Hearth* (1861), a historical novel dealing with student and vagabond life in medieval times. The technique is old-fashioned; the character sketches are excellent.

Charles Kingsley (1819–1875) wrote humanitarian novels, of which *Alton Locke* (1849) is best known. It well deserves to be read as a sympathetic earnest study of labor troubles in England. He followed Scott, without Scott's humor, in his two spirited historical romances. *Hypatia* (1853) is the story of the struggle at Alexandria between Christianity and Paganism in the fifth century, whereas *Westward Ho* (1855) is an adventure story of the Elizabethan age. The hero of *Hereward the Wake* (1866) is certainly a great fighter.

Sir Walter Besant (1836–1901) was the author of *All Sorts and Conditions of Men* (1882). He proved to be as practical a philanthropist as Dickens. The People's Palace in London was one of the good results of this volume. The building was erected to keep men from temptation by providing innocent entertainment for their leisure hours.

The Sisters Brontë

Charlotte Brontë (1816–1855) was a daughter of the Reverend Patrick Brontë, a native of County Down, Ireland. She was born at Thornton, near Bradford, Yorkshire. Soon afterward the family removed to Haworth, which is close to the dreariest moorland country in England. She is remembered mainly by reason of her *Jane Eyre* (1847), a novel which has been admired for its intense glowing style, its pictures of wild moorland scenery, and its freshness of outlook. It is one of the most remarkable stories ever written. Charlotte's *Shirley* (1849) is another of her notable works.

Meanwhile *Wuthering Heights* (1847) had been written by **Emily Brontë** (1818–1848). It is a strange, sombre work

of undoubted vigor, though it lacks the literary excellence of Charlotte's novels. Both sisters, lonely and rebellious, had in large measure the gift of expression.

George Eliot (1819–1880)

Evans is a Welsh surname. Mary Ann Evans, whose pen-name was George Eliot, was born at South Farm, Arbury, which is in Shakespeare's county of Warwickshire. Shortly after her birth the family moved to Griff House on the Arbury estate. In fine weather she walked three miles to a girl's school at Nuneaton, where her classmates are said to have noted her dark splendid eyes. At her stern father's big farmhouse in the evenings she struggled with what she termed her sick soul. This process, however, was lightened a little by the gift of humor which came to her from her mother. Her reading was wide and varied. She found opportunity for the study of Greek, Latin, French, German, Italian, and music. She was not a mere bookworm; she liked to meet people.



From a photograph

George Eliot

Fig. 141. — George Eliot.

In 1851 she removed to London to assist in editing the *Westminster Review*. Six years later she began publishing short stories in *Blackwood's Magazine* under the name of George Eliot. They were collected in two volumes and published under the title of *Scenes of Clerical Life* (1858). This work invited some attention by its quiet humor and

tenderness. Its underlying purpose may be traced back to Mrs. Gaskell's *Ruth* (1858). It seeks to show that it is character which controls human destiny, an idea emphasized by some of the leading thinkers of that age.

Earlier Novels. — When Miss Evans, still concealing her real name, published *Adam Bede* (1859), she attracted general notice. In later works she attained finer analysis



FIG. 142. — George Eliot's first home.

of human character and superior finish in style, yet many readers continue to prefer *Adam Bede*. Once more Miss Evans followed Elizabeth Gaskell. *Adam Bede*, like *Ruth*, is a study of the outcome of human frailty. The theme is similar, but the treatment is different. George Eliot, as we may call her, is more realistic; that is, she portrays scenes in real life with greater fidelity. Her strength lies in minute delineation of character in its growth for better or worse.

Another study of country life in the English midlands is *The Mill on the Floss* (1860). The authoress used to pass

Tom Hollick's mill every day on her way to school at Nuneaton, and Tom is the original of Tulliver. Maggie Tulliver is supposed to be George Eliot herself. In the story she is in every way attractive until she falls in love.

When we speak of the hero of a novel, we do not mean a man of unusual courage. The hero of a novel is simply its leading character. It is the hero who gives his name to *Silas Marner* (1861). He is a poor weaver who saves as much money as he can. He is robbed, and through a little child is led to enjoy real happiness. As in her previous novels, George Eliot endeavors to show that sooner or later sin brings punishment.

Later Novels and Other Works. — Florence in the time of Savonarola (1452–1498) is the background of *Romola* (1863). This historical novel is most carefully executed. The authoress took pains to be accurate, but she lacked the imagination necessary to inspire scenes so remote. Some of its passages have dramatic power.

In *Felix Holt* (1866) George Eliot returned to English scenes. In real life Felix Holt was a labor agitator named John Farn, a weaver with a natural gift of oratory. *Middlemarch* (1871–1872) deals with the marriage question. One of the characters, Caleb Garth, is believed to have a resemblance to the father of the authoress. *Daniel Deronda* (1876), like the two previous novels, is a thoughtful study of human motives. It contains too many uncommon words to be very popular. George Eliot regarded it as her finest work, but some readers do not agree with this opinion.

Besides her well-known poem *The Spanish Gypsy* (1868), the more notable of her other works is the *Impressions of Theophrastus Such* (1879), a collection of essays. In 1880, a few months before her death, she became the wife of John Walter Cross.

George Eliot's Place in Literature. — George Eliot had a

more serious purpose in her art than most of her predecessors. In artistic skill she is in no way superior to Jane Austen, who was the pioneer of realistic fiction in the nineteenth century. Each woman is a realist, each possesses a sense of humor, each is strongest in depicting village scenes of English life.



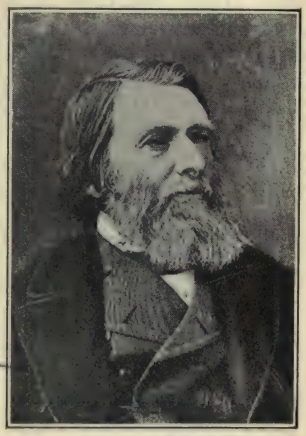
Fig. 143. — Cheyne Walk, Chelsea, where George Eliot died.

George Eliot may be regarded as the founder of the psychological novel, that is, of the novel in which the development of human character is minutely described. She excels in depicting the struggles of the human soul. She insists that fate depends upon a proper or improper use of the divine power within each human being. Her literary fame rests mainly upon her earlier novels, written at a time when her body and brain were at their best. Fewer shadows hover over those earlier works. They are more natural and vigorous, though they never attain the fire and vigor of Charlotte Brontë's works. In depth of thought George Eliot occupies a high place among novelists of the Victorian period.

John Ruskin (1819–1900)

The Land of Lorne in Argyleshire, Scotland, is the original home of the Macdougalls and the Ruskins, who were noted for their generosity and their upright character. This section

of country has not yet found a Scott to make its natural beauty known to the world. A few miles east of Loch Etive is Barraglas nan Rusgan, the Gaelic for Grey-green ridge of the Ruskins. Among the Ruskins wounded at the battle of Sherrifmuir in 1715, one young man was cared for by a Perthshire farmer, whose daughter the soldier married. He was the direct ancestor of John Ruskin, whose grandfather left Perth for England.



From a photograph

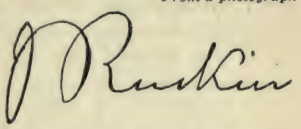


FIG. 144. — John Ruskin.

John Ruskin, the great art critic, first saw the light at London. His mother induced him by steady daily toil to learn long chapters of the Bible by heart. This discipline, "patient, accurate, and resolute," helped "to make every word of the Scriptures familiar to my ear in habitual music." The boy had a taste for drawing as well as literature. In *Præterita* (Things of the Past, 1885–1889) he admits that it was Byron who, "though he could not teach me to love mountain and sea more than I did in childhood, first animated them for me with the sense of real human nobleness and grief." In his eighteenth year he entered Christ Church College, Oxford, where he gained a prize for English poetry.

Art Criticism. — In 1843 Ruskin produced the first volume of *Modern Painters* (1843–1860). The object of the book was to protest against shallow and false criticism of the work of J. M. W. Turner (1775–1851), the English landscape

painter. Ruskin tried to make art appeal to every person of intelligence. In three additional volumes he compared the great painters of Florence and Venice with Turner. Soon Ruskin began to be recognized as an art-critic second to none.

The following passage is from the second edition of *Modern Painters*. Its music may serve to show why Ruskin is regarded as a master of English prose.

> Perhaps there is no more impressive scene on earth than the solitary extent of the Campagna of Rome under evening light. Let the reader imagine himself for the moment withdrawn from the sounds and motion of the living world, and sent forth alone into this wild and wasted plain. The earth yields and crumbles beneath his foot, tread he never so lightly, for its substance is white, hollow, and carious, like the dusty wreck of the bones of men. The long knotted grass waves and tosses feebly in the evening wind, and the shadows of its motion shake feverishly along the banks of ruin that lift themselves to the sunlight. Hillocks of mouldering earth heave around him, as if the dead beneath were struggling in their sleep. Scattered blocks of black stone, four-square remnants of mighty edifices, not one left upon another, lie upon them to keep them down.

Ruskin's *Seven Lamps of Architecture* (1849) and *Stones of Venice* (1851–1853) are brilliant attempts at reform in domestic and church architecture. He pleads eloquently for the Gothic type, which he regards as lending itself most readily to all purposes, common or uncommon.

Social and Political Works. — Besides many works on the fine arts, Ruskin wrote upon social and political topics. He believed that there can be no true art without morality, and no morality where poverty and ignorance flourish. In order to produce the conditions essential to art, he became a social reformer, like William Morris, the poet. In his *Past and Present* Carlyle had predicted the advent of free

libraries, free education, and land reform. Ruskin did much to carry out the prophesies of one whom he reverently called his "dear master."

Among moorland farmers there was a big sale of *Notes on the Construction of Sheep Folds* (1851). These gentlemen lost interest in the book when they discovered that it gave nothing more than hints as to reform in church government.

Political economy is the science which treats of the production of national wealth. On this subject Ruskin wrote four essays entitled *Unto this Last* (1862). He believed that that nation has most wealth which brings forth the greatest proportion of good and happy men. Every child should be taught a trade by the government; all men who desired work should be able to secure it from the government; the old and destitute should have all reasonable comforts through government pensions.

Ruskin himself says that the essence of all his social and political teaching may be found in two books — *Unto this Last* and *Sesame and Lilies* (1866). The latter is by far the most widely read of all these books. Sesame is a word borrowed from the Oriental story of Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves, a story found in the *Arabian Nights' Entertainment.* This word opens the hiding-place of treasures. The treasures to which Ruskin refers are in good books. He shows how books should be read. Taking illustrations from Shakespeare and Scott and Dante, he also shows how to honor women, and how women may become worthy of honor.

Two sets of letters were addressed to the workmen of England. The first he called *Time and Tide* (1864), the second *Fors Clavigera* (1871–1884). Ruskin explained the latter title by remarking that the Latin *fors* is the best part of the English words force, fortitude, and fortune. The root of the adjective *clavigera* is either *clava* (a club), *clavis* (a key), or *clavus* (a nail), and *gero* (I carry). Fors the Club-bearer

— the man with the big stick — represents Hercules or Action. The Key-bearer is Ulysses or Patience. The Nail-bearer is Lycurgus or Law.

Later Years. — Ruskin spent almost all his great wealth in helping those in poverty. In 1867 he was a lecturer at the University of Cambridge; two years later he was Professor of Fine Arts at Oxford. For over twenty years he lived quietly at Brantwood, on the shore of Lake Coniston, in Lancashire. He died in 1900.

Ruskin's Place in Literature. — As a master of English prose, Ruskin at his best stands alone in the history of literature. Influenced by Carlyle in his views of moral and social questions, he borrowed from no predecessor his insight into beauty in all its forms. At times his passion leads him to use imagery to excess; at times his earnestness carries him a long way before he stops to take breath at a period. On the other hand, Ruskin employs all the finer qualities of prose rhythm like a magician. The more delicate beauties of rhythm and harmony may never reach the ear that is heavy. In childhood the great art-critic became attuned to the harmonies of the English Bible, and these harmonies were caught and enriched by his genius.

No English prose writer seems to have penned so many passages that are impressive and suggestive, passages touched with music and majesty. An occasional lack of self-restraint appears to be the only flaw in his work. If he had learned to curtail some of his sentences, if he had bridled his impetuous imagination, he could have been prose monarch of the world of letters. It is not too much to say that in lucidity and purity, in wit and ease, in mastery of cadence, Ruskin has few serious rivals among writers of English prose.

Richard Doddridge Blackmore (1825–1900)

The Cornish peninsula in southwestern England, comprising the counties of Devon and Cornwall, has for many a century been linked with legends of King Arthur as well as with the names of Raleigh and other daring seafarers. Need we wonder that a region steeped in memories of bygone glory should have prompted a romance so successful as *Lorna Doone* (1869)?

Its author was Richard Doddridge Blackmore, a Berkshire man who received his early education at Tiverton in Devonshire, the very town in which John Ridd, the hero of *Lorna Doone,* attended school. It was neither his volumes of verse (1854–1860), nor stories such as *Clara Vaughan* (1864), but the wholesome kindly atmosphere of his masterpiece that endeared Blackmore to the cultivated public. *Lorna Doone* is one of the few works of prose fiction that widens its circle of admirers as the years pass onward. The hero, as in Defoe's stories, tells the story in a modest manly fashion. The sincerity of this love romance is rendered attractive by the rhythmic buoyant style of the narrative.

Science and Literature

We have already observed that the theories of Darwin, Spencer, and other thinkers deeply affected imaginative literature, especially during the latter half of the Victorian period. Some of their ideas disturbed the faith of many pious people. The scientists endeavored to explain the way in which the world has developed.

Among the most popular exponents of scientific thought were John Tyndall (1820–1893) and **Thomas Henry Huxley** (1825–1895). When Huxley alludes to the religious beliefs of primitive tribes, his statements have to be accepted with

caution, for at times he is mistaken. His *Autobiography* (1894), like Franklin's, is well worth reading. His *Lay Sermons* (1870), clear and vigorous, include addresses on *Improving Natural Knowledge* (1866), *A Liberal Education* (1868), and *A Piece of Chalk* (1868). The last of these was first published in *Macmillan's Magazine*. Here is a brief extract:

> Sea-beasts, such as the walrus, now restricted to the extreme north, paddled about where birds had twittered among the topmost twigs of the fir-trees. How long this state of things endured we know not, but at length it came to an end. The upheaved glacial mud hardened into the soil of modern Norfolk. Forests grew once more, the wolf and the beaver replaced the reindeer and the elephant; and at length what we call the history of England dawned.

George Meredith (1828–1909)

Meredith is a Welsh surname. George Meredith, like Dickens, was a native of Portsmouth. Part of his education was received in the Moravian School at Neuwied on the Rhine. When he returned from Germany, he engaged for a time in the study of law and in journalism, writing for the London *Morning Post*. In 1849 he married; there was a misunderstanding followed by a separation. Three years after his wife's death in 1861, he married again and lived happily at a cottage on Box Hill in Surrey. From the window of the room in which he studied and wrote, one of the finest views in Surrey stretches out in a panorama of hill and dale, melting away in the deep blue lines of the horizon. In 1866 he was a war-correspondent in Austria. After Tennyson's death Meredith was chosen as president of the Incorporated Society of Authors. For years he was a publisher's reader as well as poet and novelist. When he died in 1909, he was laid to rest in the cemetery at Dork-

ing. Barrie and other eminent men of letters were among the mourners at the funeral.

Earlier Novels. — The first of Meredith's more notable prose works was *The Shaving of Shagpat* (1856), a tale as fanciful as its title. Its Oriental splendor, its pungent wit, and its faint savor of a distant moral, leave an impression upon the memory. Meredith's first great novel was *The Ordeal of Richard Feverel* (1859). It is the history of the life and training of a young man who is thwarted by his father in a love affair. In this novel as well as in its successors are passages of uncommon beauty.

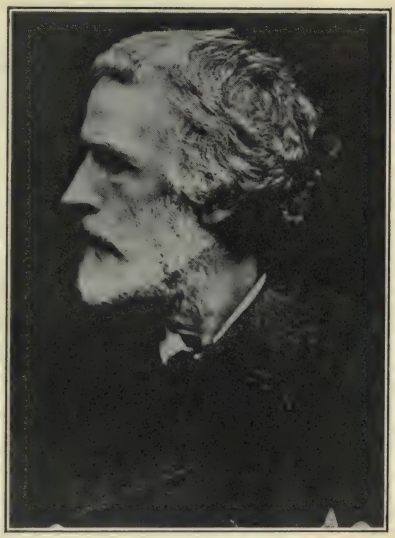


FIG. 145. — George Meredith.

Brilliant in style and in thought are *Evan Harrington* (1861), *Sandra Belloni* (1864), and *Rhoda Fleming* (1865). Probably each of these has more admirers than *Vittoria* (1867), *Harry Richmond* (1871), or *Beauchamp's Career* (1876). Like George Eliot's prose works, all of them are psychological novels with a purpose, yet their style is very different from hers. That is to say, they are novels whose main interest is in portraying the motives of men and women rather than their actions.

Later Novels. — It was *The Egoist* (1879) that won for Meredith a reputation as a master of high comedy, that is, of

comedy among persons of high social standing. An egoist, as most of us know, is a man who takes himself too seriously, a man who considers things to be good or bad according as they affect himself. Sir Willoughby Patterne is the snob or egoist. He is tested by love, and his true nature rises to the surface. Meredith's purpose in this novel and in others is to improve society by causing people to smile at their own weaknesses.

Although the novels which preceded *Diana of the Crossways* (1885) contain not a few pictures of womanhood, it is here that the author first portrays women as frankly as men are portrayed. His heroines are beautiful because they are healthy. Diana, a woman of culture, appears as a belle with whom various men profess to be in love. At a quaint old house known as the Crossways Mr. Warwick proposes to her and is accepted. Lord Dannisburgh's nephew foolishly confides a State secret to her, and she passes it on to the editor of a daily paper. Meredith declares that women, like men, have rights of self-development. If Diana may be taken to express his thoughts, he does not fear the future. He has a vision of nobler conditions for womanhood:

> Look lady, where yon river winds its line
> Toward sunset, and receives on breast and face
> The splendour of fair life: to be divine
> 'Tis nature bids you be to nature true;
> Flowing with beauty, lending earth your grace,
> Reflecting heaven in clearness you.[1]
>
> — *Ballad of Fair Ladies in Revolt.*

Some of Meredith's plots hinge on unusual circumstances and exceptional people, yet at all times he is impelled to express his sense of justice, a virtue for which few of us offer a sincere prayer. In the next three novels, as in several of

[1] By permission of Scribner's.

the earlier, the novelist pleads for the deliverance of womanhood from unjust laws or from those influences that hinder her highest development. In *One of our Conquerors* (1890) the author strives too eagerly for sparkling epigrams. In trying to be concise, he sometimes becomes obscure. Of the heroines in *Lord Ormont and his Aminta* (1894) and *The Amazing Marriage* (1895), Carinthia in the latter is the more satisfactory; indeed, Aminta is one of the least successful of Meredith's heroines. Carinthia seems to stand as a type of the strong-willed woman who lived in the old coaching days before duelling had gone out of fashion. The book illustrates the supreme value of respect as the basis of love. Physical loveliness is of less importance.

Poems. — Meredith issued *Poems* (1851), *Modern Love* (1862), and *Poems and Lyrics* (1883). His poetry was collected into a single volume in 1912. His sympathy for what he regards as the wrongs of womanhood is far more decisive than Tennyson's in *The Princess*. This attitude he has expressed in poems such as *The Sage Enamoured*, where he declares that sin's punishment is certain, so certain that the outcome is "the very spirit maimed."

In the novels the characters belong to fashionable society, whereas in the poetry a hearty interest is shown in men of humbler rank. *A Stave of Roving Tim* is as democratic as Burns's *Jolly Beggars*. A feeling of fellowship is the keynote of poems such as *Grandfather Bridgeman* and *The Patriot Engineer*. Democracy, or the sense of brotherhood, opens a man's eyes to discern "the Great Unseen." As he puts it in *The Test of Manhood* —

> that way the road,
> With his dark-lantern mind, unled, alone,
> Wearifully through forest-tracks unsown,
> He travels, urged by some internal good.[1]

[1] By permission of Scribner's.

Meredith's Place in Literature. — In adroit portrayal of human motives, Meredith is among the foremost writers of modern times. His world, like that of Browning, is the world of the soul. For him the body is but the husk of life. Its sensations are petty, except so far as they express the secret comedy or tragedy of the mind. Meredith was a man of the world, a man who had observed its faults and follies, yet he never lost his temper or his belief in humanity. It is comedy rather than humor or satire that appeals to him most, and in it is a little of the salt of irony.

Meredith possesses the fervor of imagination that belongs to a true lyric poet. In either verse or prose he can be so simple that a child may enjoy him, or he can exhibit so many mannerisms of style that he must be read with patience. He can make his phrases trill like a chorus of birds in the springtime, or he can hush the melody so that it escapes the ear that is dull.

It may be urged that there is little action in Meredith's works, yet for many readers there is ample compensation in the frequent daintiness, choiceness of phrase, and beauty of romance that enrich the dominant realism. He is earnest in his purpose even when he is most witty. He is conscientious but not morose. It is this union of bold character-drawing with cheeriness of outlook that constitutes his chief glory.

Walter Horatio Pater (1839–1894)

Walter Horatio Pater, whose father's birthplace was in America, went to Oxford in 1858. He was associated with college life until his death in 1894. During the last quarter of the nineteenth century he gained distinction as a critic of art and literature. A man of unusual modesty and refinement, he had no time to be in a hurry. That is to say,

he put conscience into his work. He believed that neglected elements are sometimes the most significant. In the last essay of his *Studies in the History of the Renaissance* (1873), he remarks:

> Every moment some form grows perfect in hand or face; some tone on the hills or the sea is choicer than the rest; some mood of passion or insight or intellectual excitement is irresistibly real and attractive to us — for that moment only. . . . How shall we pass most swiftly from point to point, and be present always at the focus where the greatest number of vital forces unite in their purest energy? To burn always with this hard gem-like flame, to maintain this ecstasy, is success in life.[1]

This passage is the key to all of Pater's criticism. Any topic may be discussed from different points of view. He tries to focus his energy upon some one characteristic and shows what it means for him. This is what he does in his famous essay on the painter Leonardo da Vinci (1452–1519) and in the other essays of his *Renaissance*. He finds new values in human productions. He is a creative critic.

The fruit of Pater's classical studies is partly seen in his novel *Marius the Epicurean* (1885). The scene is laid in the second century of the Christian era, at a time when the old pagan beliefs of Rome were yielding to Christianity. The book is notable for its pictures of the manners of the age. Some of the character-drawing, however, is scarcely satisfactory.

In his *Imaginary Portraits* (1837) and in the later as well as the earlier works, Pater at times is so careful in his choice of words and phrases that he seems to sacrifice vigor and naturalness, yet there is no question about the charm of his style as a whole. Few men have ever equalled him in his ability to express subtle shades of thought with dignity and delicacy. Some of his best qualities take their color from Ruskin.

[1] Copyright by The Macmillan Company.

Thomas Hardy (1840–)

Thomas Hardy, a native of Rockhampton in Dorsetshire, began in his sixteenth year to serve his apprenticeship as an architect, specializing in church construction. He was very successful in his profession when he turned to literature. At the age of thirty-five he married Miss Lavinia Gifford. After spending some time in London, he returned to the county of his childhood and in 1885 took up his residence at Dorchester.

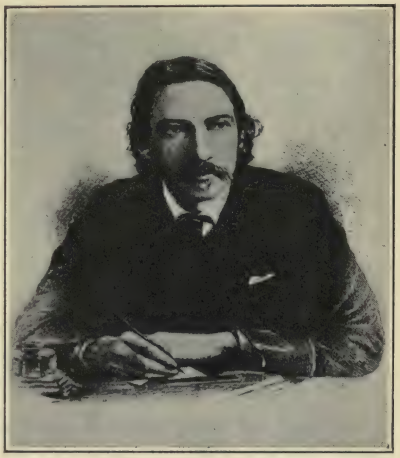
Besides poems and poetic dramas, Mr. Hardy has written novels whose scenes are laid in Wessex, a name which he had given to a few of the southwestern counties of England. Some of the more notable prose works are *Under the Greenwood Tree* (1872), *Far from the Madding Crowd* (1874), *The Return of the Native* (1878), probably the best of the novels, *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* (1891), and *Jude the Obscure* (1895). The last of these is the least satisfactory.

If we may judge from these realistic novels, Mr. Hardy is a disciple of Darwin. Natural laws dominate the conduct of his characters, who are drawn with power and clearness. Apparently the novelist has no very exalted opinion of womanhood, for all his women are creatures swayed by whim or emotion. The scenes that he creates are interesting even when they impress us as unreal. The plots are well constructed, and the diction is often of great beauty. In spite of the rather gloomy atmosphere of his works, Mr. Hardy is one of the most admired of modern English novelists.

Robert Louis Stevenson (1850–1894)

According to his birth-year, Robert Louis Stevenson, a native of Edinburgh, was the last of the great Victorian writers. His father and grandfather were the ablest light-

house engineers in Britain. Even in childhood he was fond of reading and liked to put his impressions into verse and prose. In his seventeenth year he entered the University of Edinburgh. In order to forget the poor health which he had inherited from his mother, he sometimes played boyish pranks. Once he shocked the fashionable Scots people of his native city by gravely appearing at an evening party in a flannel shirt.



From a photograph

Robert Louis Stevenson

FIG. 146. — Robert Louis Stevenson.

Stevenson's father desired his son to become a civil engineer, but allowed him to study law. His heart, however, was in literature. The climate of his native land did not suit the young Scotsman, so he went to France and other countries. In 1880 he married Mrs. Fanny Os-



Courtesy of Hon. J. H. Mulligan, formerly U. S. Consul at Samoa

FIG. 147. — Stevenson's schooner "Equator" at Apia, Samoa.

bourne, a California lady whom he had met in France. Eight years later he was writing for *Scribner's Magazine.* The same year he promised to contribute articles for Mr. S. S. McClure. Stevenson started on a cruise among the islands of the Pacific, and in 1889 he bought an estate on the island of Samoa.

The following year with his family he settled in Samoa, and there he worked himself to death. In 1893 when he became too feeble to dictate by voice, this courageous man cheerfully began to dictate *St. Ives* in the deaf-and-dumb alphabet. This tale is one of the works containing allusions to old days at Swanston, the hamlet where Stevenson passed some of his boyhood days. Death came to him in the winter of 1894 while he was engaged upon the masterly novel, *Weir of Hermiston.*

On the mountain summit of Samoa is his tomb up toward the stars, yet within sound of the murmuring sea-waves.



Courtesy of Hon. J. H. Mulligan

FIG. 148. — Samoa home of Stevenson. Cross marks site of his grave.

Peace be to the ashes of Louis Stevenson, the gentle and the gallant-hearted, who fell like a hero in the midst of life's battle. At times there must have been a silent yearning for the hills and glens of the far-off motherland, but neither sickness nor exile could vanquish that bright spirit. With his Samoan friends we may say, "Tofa, Tusitala! Good-by, Teller of Tales!"

Essays. — Stevenson is never wearisome. His first notable essay writing is *An Inland Voyage* (1878), which he planned

as a "jolly book of gossip." The essayist and his friend Sir Walter Simpson started in 1876 on a canoe trip from Antwerp in Belgium. The little book is simply a humorous account of a vacation abroad. In *Travels with a Donkey* (1879) we see Stevenson buying a donkey at Monastier for sixty-five francs. Donkey though she was, Modestine was highly intelligent. The book treats of travels in France. The first camping out in a wood and the description of nature in night-time are of unusual interest. The drollery and quiet fun will scarcely blind the reader to the graceful style.

Among the other charming essays are *Virginibus Puerisque* (For Girls and Boys, 1881), *Familiar Studies of Men and Books* (1882), and *Memories and Portraits* (1887). The last of these works explains, in the essay entitled A College Magazine, how its author learned to write with skill.

Novels. — In numerous books and pamphlets Stevenson reached all classes of people, young and old. Besides short stories such as *Will o' the Mill*, he wrote novels of distinction. He never assumes that a writer knows everything, so he makes one or two of the characters tell the story. This gives an appearance of reality. For instance, Jim Hawkins and Doctor Livesey in *Treasure Island* (1882) tell what occurred in the course of the voyage of the "Hispaniola." Narrated with artistic genius, this is one of the world's choicest pirate stories. Not only boys, but scholarly critics like Matthew Arnold, have found it most attractive.

Among the many fascinating stories of Stevenson, it is difficult to make a choice. The *New Arabian Nights* (1882) deals with deeds of daring, in an easy whimsical fashion. *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1886) brings out the details of a man who led a double life. *Kidnapped* (1886) is a historical novel whose plot is laid about the middle of the eighteenth century. Its pictures of life and society are accurate. Year after year ships left British ports with bands

of luckless youths who had been misled or kidnapped. In remote cottages lads were sometimes taken by night from their beds, and parents feared to let children out of doors after sunset. *The Master of Ballantrae*(1889) shows some strange characters. *Catriona* (1893), a sequel to *Kidnapped,* is a romance named after a sweet-voiced Highland maid whose soul is clean, bold, and impetuous. The kind-hearted witty Barbara Grant is another of its well-drawn characters.

Poems. — Stevenson's poems include *The Child's Garden of Verses* (1885), *Ballads* (1890), and *Poems and Ballads* (1895). He kept his youthful spirit longer than any writer in English literary history. We are all young again as we read *The Sick Child.*

Child. I have a fear that I cannot say.
What have I done, and what do I fear,
And why are you crying, mother dear?
Mother. An hour or two more and God is so kind,
The day shall be blue in the window-blind,
Then shall my child go sweetly asleep,
And dream of the birds and the hills of sheep.

Stevenson's Place in Literature. — Stevenson is the most eminent writer of pure romance during the Victorian period. Sometimes big words conceal small thoughts, but he never tries to play such tricks. Behind the simplicity and grace of his style is the insight of a thinker as well as a stylist. He never parades his character-drawing, because his sense of humor and his artistic instinct hold him in check. He delineates Alan Breck and other characters with a few masterly strokes rather than by the slow imposing method of a psychologist.

Thought and imagination are plentiful in Stevenson, yet his essays, poems, and novels are so easy to read that a careless reader may be misled. Under the buoyancy and boyish dash of the man is a stern sense of duty that caused him to

detest work which was merely good enough. No man ever put more conscience into his productions. He has not the creative power of Scott, but he is superior to his master in diction and at times in plot construction.

It was the spiritual vitality of Stevenson that kept him alert and joyous, responsive to all that is tender and odd and mysterious, quietly accepting the gloom and the gayety, the tears and the laughter, of his fellow-men. He is one of those idealists who can make the lily rise unspotted from the mire in which it grows, and it is men of this stamp whom the world will not readily forget. Barrie, Conan Doyle, and twenty others have followed in his footsteps. They admired the spirit of the man who wrote in the *Requiem :*

Under the wide and starry sky,
Dig the grave and let me lie;
Glad did I live and gladly die,
And I laid me down with a will.

SUMMARY

1. The expansion of democratic power as well as of the arts and sciences affected both society and literature during the Victorian period.

2. Mrs. Browning and Christina Rossetti were the ablest poetesses, as Tennyson and Browning were the most illustrious poets. Tennyson's *The Princess* contains some of his choicest lyrics. Among the more famous sections of his *Idylls of the King* are *Gareth and Lynette, Lancelot and Elaine,* and *The Passing of Arthur.* Browning's simpler and more popular works include poems such as *Cavalier Tunes, The Lost Leader,* and *How They Brought the Good News.*

3. Matthew Arnold's *Sohrab and Rustum* is only one of a number of his charming poems. He was the most influential critic of his time.

4. The Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, a group of artists and poets, had the poet D. G. Rossetti as a leader. With him were Morris, Swinburne, and others.

5. Fitzgerald, Alfred Austin, Davidson, and Thompson were poetic stars of some prominence.

6. The first of the Victorian prose writers was Carlyle, whose *Essay on Burns* is the most familiar of his shorter works. Easier to read, but less profound in thought, is Macaulay, whose *Life of Johnson, Lord Clive, Warren Hastings,* and other essays are brilliant in style. His *Lays of Ancient Rome* are spirited verses.

7. Newman, like Walter Pater, was one of the masters of prose style, more restrained than either of his predecessors.

8. Never were so many novels written as during the last century. The first born of all Victorian novelists was Thackeray, whose *Henry Esmond* is a masterpiece. While he was in America he lectured, the lectures appearing later in a book entitled *English Humourists.* More widely read than Thackeray, but less polished in style, was Dickens, the author of *David Copperfield* and other delightful specimens of prose fiction. Among those whom he inspired was Mrs. Gaskell, the authoress of *Cranford.*

9. The sisters Brontë and George Eliot, though different in style, are the most talented women writers of Victorian prose. George Eliot's *Silas Marner* is a short romantic story of a man who found that money is not the greatest thing in the world.

10. Like Walter Pater, Ruskin was distinguished as an art-critic and as a writer of beautiful prose. Influenced by Carlyle, he was also a social reformer.

11. Scientific ideas were simplified through the public lectures of men like Huxley. Some of these addresses were published under the title of *Lay Sermons,* that is, addresses by a layman rather than a clergyman. Three of the best

are entitled *Improving Natural Knowledge, A Liberal Education,* and *A Piece of Chalk.* Huxley, whose *Autobiography* is written in forceful English, was one of the men who affected the thought of Meredith and other men of letters.

12. Stevenson's *Inland Voyage* and *Travels with a Donkey* have been enjoyed by most people who have read them. No one needs to be urged to become acquainted with Blackmore's *Lorna Doone* or Stevenson's *Treasure Island.*

Test Questions

1. Name some of the women who won fame as writers of verse or prose during the Victorian period. Compare any two in regard to (*a*) style and (*b*) thought. What is a psychological novel?

2. Who wrote some of the great English elegies? Which of Tennyson's poems do you like best? Give a reason for your answer. Who is the leading character in *The Princess?* Why was Arthur selected as hero of the *Idylls of the King?* Write an essay on any one of the idylls.

3. How do we know that Browning was fond of horses? Have you memorized any of his verses? Give an outline of either *Hervé Riel* or *Pheidippides.*

4. In order to make Arnold's chief poem even more interesting, arrange with one of your classmates that you represent one character and he the other. Let each of you read or recite as if you were characters in a play.

5. Explain the Pre-Raphaelite and the Oxford Movement. What American poet influenced Rossetti? In what way?

6. Who succeeded Tennyson as poet laureate?

7. In which works do the following quotations appear — O for the touch of a vanished hand; God's in his Heaven; One who never turned his back; Success sways with the breath of heaven; Give me to dream dreams all would love to dream?

8. Why do many people enjoy Carlyle's *Essay on Burns?* Name any of his other works. What is his conception of history?

9. Indicate Macaulay's chief strength and chief weakness. Reproduce in your own words the substance of any one of his essays or poems.

10. Draw a pen-portrait or a sketch in words of any of the heroes

or heroines in one of the works of Thackeray, Dickens, Meredith, or Stevenson. To what extent were these novelists influenced by democratic or by aristocratic ideas?

11. A good book is one that makes you try to be kinder or nobler in every way. What is your impression of Thackeray's or of Stevenson's essays?

12. Who wrote *Crossing the Bar, The Earthly Paradise, Cranford, Sesame and Lilies, Lorna Doone, Travels with a Donkey?* Read one or more of these, watching the rhythm of the sentences and the vigor or beauty of the language.

ADDITIONAL AUTHORS WITH CHIEF WORKS

Poets. — James Clarence Mangan (1803–1840), *Dark Rosaleen;* William Edmondstoune Aytoun (1813–1865), *Lays of the Scottish Cavaliers;* Aubrey de Vere (1814–1902), *Irish Odes;* Arthur Hugh Clough (1819–1861), *Bothie of Tober-na-Vuolich;* Coventry Patmore (1823–1896), *The Angel in the House;* Sidney Dobell (1824–1874), *The Roman;* William Allingham (1824–1889), *Irish Songs and Poems;* Adelaide Anne Procter (1825–1864), *Legends and Lyrics;* Jean Ingelow (1830–1897), *Poems;* Sir Edwin Arnold (1832–1904), *The Light of Asia;* Robert Bridges (1844–), who became poet laureate in 1913, *New Poems;* W. E. Henley (1849–1903), *Poems.*

Novelists. — Edward George Bulwer, Lord Lytton (1803–1873), *Last Days of Pompeii;* Charles Lever (1806–1872), *Charles O'Malley;* Anthony Trollope (1815–1882), *Barchester Towers;* James Grant (1822–1887), *The Romance of War;* Wilkie Collins (1824–1889), *The Woman in White;* Dinah Maria Craik (1826–1877), *John Halifax, Gentleman;* Charles L. Dodgson (Lewis Carroll, 1832–1898), *Alice in Wonderland;* Joseph Henry Shorthouse (1834–1903), *John Inglesant;* William Black (1841–1898), *Madcap Violet;* Mrs. Humphry Ward (1851–), *David Grieve;* Rosa Mulholland (1855–), *A Round Table of Stories.*

Miscellaneous Prose Writers. — John Stuart Mill (1806–1873), *Utilitarianism;* John Brown (1810–1882), *Rab and his Friends,* one of the best of dog stories; James Anthony Froude (1818–1894), *History of England;* Henry Thomas Buckle (1821–1862), *History of Civilization;* Sir Henry Maine (1822–1888), *Ancient Law;* Edward Augustus Freeman (1823–1892), *History of the Norman Conquest;* Thompson, William (Lord Kelvin) (1824–1907), *The Origin of Life;* William Stubbs (1825–1901), *Constitutional History of Eng-*

land; Walter Bagehot (1826–1877), *Literary Studies;* Richard Holt Hutton (1826–1897), *Literary Essays;* Patrick Weston Joyce (1827–), *Old Celtic Romances;* Samuel Rawson Gardiner (1829–1902), *History of England;* Justin McCarthy (1830–1912), *History of our own Times;* Frederic Harrison (1831–), *American Addresses;* Leslie Stephen (1832–1904), *History of English Thought in the Eighteenth Century;* John Richard Green (1837–1883), *Short History of the English People;* John Morley (1838–), *Studies in Literature;* William Edward Hartpole Lecky (1838–1903), *History of England in the Eighteenth Century;* James Bryce (1838–), *The American Commonwealth;* John Addington Symonds (1840–1893), *History of the Renaissance in Italy;* Austin Dobson (1840–), *At the Sign of the Lyre;* Edward Dowden (1843–1913), *Studies in Literature;* Andrew Lang (1844–1912), one of the ablest men of letters of modern times, *Adventures among Books* and many other works; George Edward Bateman Saintsbury (1845–), *History of Criticism;* William Leonard Courtney (1850–), *The Feminine Note in Fiction;* Augustine Birrell (1850–), *Men, Women, and Books;* Sir William Robertson Nicoll (1851–), *Round of the Clock;* Robert Bontine Cunninghame-Graham (1852–), *Vanished Arcadia;* Oscar Wilde (1854–1900), *The Importance of Being Earnest.*

SUPPLEMENTARY READING

Biographies of leading writers of the Victorian period are in the English Men of Letters series (Macmillan), $.40 each and in the Great Writers series (Scribner), $1.00. Complete works of the poets are in the Globe series (Macmillan), $1.75, a standard edition. Other well-known editions are the Astor series (Crowell), $.60, (Oxford Press), $1.75, and the Cambridge series (Houghton, Mifflin), $1.50 to $3.00.

Selections for reading may be found in books previously mentioned — Bronson, Manly, Newcomer, and others. Inexpensive editions of English classics are published by Macmillan and other firms. Besides general works to which allusion has been made in earlier chapters, the following volumes ought to prove helpful:

a. For Classes

E. Crowe, *With Thackeray in America,* N. Y. (Scribner's), $2.00.

T. H. Dickinson and F. W. Roe, *Nineteenth Century Prose,* N. Y. (American Book Co.), $1.00.

J. F. Genung, *Tennyson's In Memoriam*, Bost. (Houghton), $1.25.

A. J. George, *From Chaucer to Arnold*, N. Y. (Macmillan), $1.00.

B. A. Heydrick, *How to Study Literature*, N. Y. (Hinds and Noble), $.75.

W. Minto, *Manual of English Prose Literature*, Bost. (Ginn), $1.50; deals mainly with De Quincey, Macaulay, and Carlyle.

W. L. Phelps, *Essays of Stevenson*, N. Y. (Scribner's), $.75

Mrs. Wm. Sharp, *Women Poets of the Victorian Era*, N. Y. (Simmons), $.40.

C. Waldstein, *Art in the Nineteenth Century*, N. Y. (Macmillan), $.60.

b. For Teachers and Others

W. D. Adams, *Dictionary of the Drama*, A. to G., Vol. I, Phila. (Lippincott), $3.00.

G. Balfour, *Life of R. L. Stevenson* (Abridged), N. Y. (Scribner's), $1.00.

A. Beatty, *Swinburne's Dramas*, N. Y. (Crowell), Astor series, $.60.

S. A. Brooke, *Tennyson, his Art and Relation to Modern Life*, N. Y. (Putnam), $2.00.

W. C. Brownell, *Victorian Prose Masters*, N. Y. (Scribner's), $1.50.

G. W. Cooke, *Guide-Book to Poetical and Dramatic Works of R. Browning*, Bost. (Houghton), $2.00.

E. Grainger, *Index to Poetry and Recitations* (Title and First Line Indexes), Chic. (McClurg), $5.00.

W. H. Hunt, *Pre-Raphaelitism*, 2 vols., N. Y. (Macmillan), $10.00.

T. H. Huxley, *Lay Sermons*, N. Y. (Appleton), $1.75.

M. Luce, *Handbook to the Works of Tennyson*, N. Y. (Macmillan), $1.75.

H. Matson, *References for Literary Workers*, Chic. (McClurg), $2.00.

E. Meynell, *Life of Francis Thompson*, N. Y. (Scribner's), $4.00.

Paul E. More, *The Drift of Romanticism*, Bost. (Houghton), $1.25.

I. G. Mudge, *A Thackeray Dictionary* (characters, localities, etc., of novels), N. Y. (Dutton), $3.00.

C. H. Nordby, *Influence of Old Norse Literature upon English Literature*, N. Y. (Lemcke), $1.00.

Mrs. S. Orr, *Handbook to Works of R. Browning*, N. Y. (Macmillan), $1.75.

W. L. Phelps, *Pure Gold of Nineteenth Century Literature*, N. Y. (Crowell), $.50.

A. J. Philip, *A Dickens Dictionary* (characters and scenes of novels and miscellaneous works), N. Y. (Dutton), $3.00.

A. Compton Rickett, *William Morris, Poet, Craftsman, Social Reformer*, N. Y. (Dutton), $2.50.

E. Rhys, *Lyric Poetry*, N. Y. (Dutton), $1.50. From early times to Swinburne.

G. Saintsbury, *History of Nineteenth Century Literature*, N. Y. (Macmillan), $1.50.

F. O. Saxelby, *A Hardy Dictionary* (characters and scenes of novels and poems), N. Y. (Dutton), $3.00.

Wm. Sharp, *Literary Geography*, N. Y. (Duffield), $1.50.

E. C. Stedman, *Victorian Anthology*, Bost. (Houghton), $1.75.

R. L. Stevenson, *Poems and Ballads*, N. Y. (Scribner's), $2.00.

G. M. Trevelyan, *The Poetry and Philosophy of Meredith*, N. Y. (Scribner's), $1.00.

J. Tyndall, *Fragments of Science*, 2 vols., N. Y. (Appleton), $2.00.

H. Van Dyke, *The Poetry of Tennyson*, N. Y. (Scribner's), $2.00.

H. Walker, *The Age of Tennyson*, N. Y. (Macmillan), $1.00.

H. Walker, *Literature of the Victorian Era*, N.Y. (Putnam's), $3.50.

CHAPTER XV

RECENT LITERATURE

1900–

Difficulty of Understanding Our Own Time. — It is not easy to understand or to portray the age in which we live. The man who gazes upon a forest from a distance gains a better idea of its relation to the rest of the landscape than the man who is walking among the trees. Lord Bacon, for instance, speaking of the proud Shakespearean period, asserts that "this age of the world is somewhat upon the descent of the wheel." Matthew Arnold, speaking of the great Victorian period, tells us that England has no ideas. Opinions such as these should warn us not to be too sure that we can judge with fairness the literature of this twentieth century. There never was a period when the public did not believe that its greatest writers were all numbered with the illustrious dead.

Characteristics of Recent Literature. — Recent literature is the direct outcome of recent thought. British public opinion has taken two forms. On the one hand are those who seek to promote the welfare of the people by binding the different colonies into closer unity with the mother country. These are the imperialists, the people who look outward for new life and new energy. On the other hand are those who have been impressed by the poverty and distress of many of their fellow-men. These are the social reformers, the people who seek to promote greater happiness within the British Isles by curbing the power of those that seem to oppress the weak.

These two phases of public opinion are reflected in recent literature. The tendency of the first is toward romance or idealism like that of Mr. Alfred Noyes; the tendency of the second is toward realism like that of Mr. John Masefield. Each of these social movements is doing good in its own way; each is working for the betterment of mankind. Whatever be their general attitude toward the society in which they live, all literary men and women seem to be co-workers in a process which we have reason to believe is divine. The choicest literature lives because it makes a spiritual appeal; it will continue to live so long as it reaches the heart and the conscience of humanity.

1. *DRAMATISTS*

In the course of the last two centuries English drama lost its supremacy, partly as a result of the rise of prose fiction. Toward the end of the nineteenth century a number of writers began to recognize the peculiar charm and power of a well-constructed play. Good plays could almost always be seen on the Parisian stage, but it was Norway that gave birth to Henrik Ibsen (1828–1906), a playwright whose stimulus was felt in the dramatic literature of the civilized world. Artists and stage managers of every nationality have no scruples in borrowing from other lands. More and more the drama of to-day aims at a swift terse representation of life and its problems.

Henry Arthur Jones (1851–) is one of the best-known English playwrights and critics. More than once has he reminded us that many people are prejudiced against the theatre. This prejudice he traces back to the time of the Restoration drama, when not a few people held aloof from the theatre and denounced the playwright's profession. Drama is intended, he asserts, to be " a lovable guide in the

great business and conduct of life." The plays of Mr. Jones, whether serious or comic, set forth the manners of to-day with great skill. This author's knowledge of stagecraft is admirably exhibited in such plays as *The Dancing Girl* (1891), *Mrs. Dane's Defence* (1900), and *The Ogre* (1911).

Sir Arthur Wing Pinero (1855–) first saw the light in London. His experience as an actor has been invaluable to him as a playwright. He is a master of the details that go to make a play successful on the stage, and he knows how to introduce incidents in such a way as to reveal character. He is the author of a great many plays of different kinds, from *The Magistrate* (1885), a farce in three acts, to *The Second Mrs. Tanqueray* (1893), one of his serious plays dealing with individual or social problems.

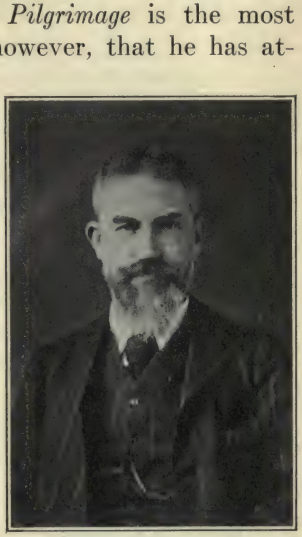
Sir Arthur is evidently a man who has made a study of women. As a rule he is ready to make excuses for weak women such as Theophile Fraser in *The Benefit of the Doubt* (1895) and the heroine in *Iris* (1901). They are women that revolt against the laws of society and meet with tragic defeat.

The best constructed of this author's plays are *The Thunderbolt* (1908) and *Mid-Channel* (1909). The latter of these is probably his masterpiece. The action, carried out by the aid of only a few characters, is simple and natural. These plays are the work of a man who is aware of what the average playgoer desires in the way of theatrical entertainment.

George Bernard Shaw (1856–) was born at Dublin, yet he is not classed with the Irish school of playwrights because, with the exception of *John Bull's Other Island* (1904), his plays are in no way concerned with the land of his birth. Well read in modern German literature and with a talent for music, he began to make a name for himself in London as a journalist, a dramatic critic, and a social reformer with Puritan instincts. He forces people to gasp with wonder or to laugh with a pretence of indifference. He professes,

like Dean Swift, to mock at sentiment, and yet he is as sentimental as his neighbors.

Between 1879 and 1883 Mr. Shaw wrote a number of novels, of which *Cashel Byron's Pilgrimage* is the most familiar. It is as a playwright, however, that he has attracted the attention of Europe and America. In stagecraft he is less careful than either Jones or Pinero, but he is more brilliant, more daring. His characters, like their creator, are argumentative and intellectual. It is their saucy wit that saves the arguments from being tiresome, and underneath the wit lies a serious purpose. Drama implies action, a lack of which is at times noticeable in Mr. Shaw's works.



Courtesy of "Review of Reviews"

FIG. 149. — George Bernard Shaw.

Among the best of the comedies are *Arms and the Man* (1894), *Candida* (1895), and *You Never Can Tell* (1900). To many people the most audacious of Mr. Shaw's works is *Man and Superman* (1905), whose hero is John Tanner, another name for the playwright himself. The title of this play suggests that instead of man must come the superman, that is, a man with stronger body and brains than the average man of to-day. The leading motive of the comedy is that woman, and not man, begins the love-making. *The Shewing-up of Blanco Posnet* (1909) has a preface that is much longer than the play itself, and some of the playwright's prefaces are excellent. The scene of this short play is "a territory of the United States of America."

Mr. Shaw's success has been due to the forceful lively way

in which he presents his ideas rather than to his dramatic power. Whether we agree or disagree with some of his opinions, there is no question about his mental power. He can think and he can write. He reaches the intellect oftener than he reaches the heart. We admire some of his characters, but we scarcely love them. Mr. Shaw is always entertaining, yet at times he fails to convince us that his characters have real flesh and blood.

Sir James Matthew Barrie (1860–). — Wit is like the sharp rattle of a hailstorm; humor is like the soft twining of a Scots mist. Wit is the lightning; humor is the sunshine. These analogies illustrate one of the distinctions between Mr. Shaw and Sir James Matthew Barrie. No one who takes up a book by Barrie can be in the slightest doubt that his gift is that of humor — the rarer, the gentler, the kindlier of the two phases of comedy.



Fig. 150. — Sir James Matthew Barrie.

It was in the little Forfarshire weaving town of Kirriemuir, known and loved by his readers as Thrums, that Barrie was born. At the age of ten he was sent to the Dundee Academy, and later he graduated at the University of Edinburgh. Modest in manner, the sinewy dark-complexioned youth set out for England to make his fortune. When he joined the staff of the *Nottingham Journal*, he found that journalism helped him to write better and to extend his knowledge of mankind, as it had helped Dickens and many another.

Barrie first acquired fame as a novelist. *The Little Minister* (1891), whose scene is laid in his native town, exhibits that quality of intimateness which marks *Margaret*

Ogilvy (1896) and all of his works. He takes every reader into his confidence, expressing his feelings with freedom and directness. Among his other novels one of the most admirable is *Sentimental Tommy* (1896). It is a picture of boyhood as seen through the eyes of a man whose heart is as delightfully boyish as it was in the days that are gone forever.

It is as a playwright, however, that Barrie has achieved the greatest literary success. He is alive to the practical requirements of the modern theatre. In *The Wedding Guest* (1900), for instance, we are not annoyed by tiresome or disagreeable words and actions. Something is left to the imagination. Perhaps the best of the dramas is *The Admirable Crichton* (1902), fanciful but never false to human nature.

Some of the choicest plays are *Peter Pan* (1904), revealing the fairyland of childhood in a most convincing manner; *What Every Woman Knows* (1908), set forth with the insight and wisdom of genius; *Rosalind* (1912), the quaint story of an actress; and *The Adored One*, or, as it is called in America, *The Legend of Leonora* (1913), the most whimsical of all the comedies. The last of these is, as Barrie explains, a play written only for people who have had a mother. It is at once a charming tribute to womanhood and a delicate satire on the English law courts.

Barrie knows how to write literature, how to express his ideas simply and impressively. He has the social imagination whereby he easily puts himself in the position of others. He surprises and pleases by the vigor of his sympathy, his naturalness, his fanciful humor. The best of his novels and dramas constitute a distinct contribution to the treasures of English literature, a contribution which will probably be remembered after the present generation has given place to others.

John Galsworthy (1867–), a native of Coombe, Surrey, is both a novelist and a dramatist. The first of his novels

that attracted general attention was *The Island Pharisees* (1904), the story of a man who tried to find agreeable associates. Everywhere among the people of Britain he found Pharisees, that is, persons who thanked God that they were better than their neighbors. The plot is rather weak, but Mr. Galsworthy has steadily improved in everything that goes to make a successful story.



FIG. 151. — John Galsworthy.

Among his later novels are *The Man of Property* (1906), written to reveal the self-esteem of a man who has plenty of money, and *Fraternity* (1909), the most serious of all these novels. The latter is a story in which is shown with great skill the difficulty of attaining a real brotherhood among mankind. As Mr. Galsworthy sees it, it is only by changing the social structure that either the rich or the poor can achieve their ideals. *The Patrician* (1911) is less interesting than *The Dark Flower* (1913), whose hero is Mark Lennon. For him love is the dark flower that never brings permanent happiness. Unlike most men, the hero seems to have profited little by the teaching of experience.

As a playwright Mr. Galsworthy scarcely achieved a theatrical success with *The Silver Box* (1906), written to show that the poor need not expect the same justice in a law court as people that are wealthy. Most of the plays, like most of the novels, deal with problems of modern society. Their purpose is to depict those that are oppressed. In *Joy* (1907) Mr. Galsworthy does not try to teach, but to entertain, and he succeeds admirably. In *Strife* (1909) we are shown a conflict between capital and labor.

The Pigeon (1912), a fantastic comedy, seems to be a good-natured satire on its author. The pigeon is Christopher Wellwyn, who allows himself to be "plucked" or used by every person who is in trouble. The plot is rather improbable, yet the characters are so human as to enlist general sympathy.

Mr. Galsworthy is one of the most popular novelists and dramatists of this generation. He is a shrewd impartial observer of life as it is, and he can interpret what falls under his notice. He is never content with the mere external fact; he lays bare its inner meaning. This he does with the patience and certainty of one who has mastered the technical side of literary art. His clear vision and his sense of humor have taught him to note his own imperfections and to rise toward high artistic achievement.



FIG. 152. — Stephen Phillips.

Stephen Phillips (1869–) studied for the civil service, for a time was on the stage, and, like Shakespeare, he played the ghost in *Hamlet*. During a spell of illness when he was about fifteen, his mother read to him Coleridge's *Christabel*, a reading from which he dates the charm of the influence of poetry.

Eremus (1894) is not the earliest of the poems of Mr. Phillips, but its blank verse is interesting as showing the progress that he has made in later works. The first poem that caught the ear of the populace was *Christ in Hades* (1896), a bold treatment of an unusual subject. It contains many noble passages, marred a little at times by irregular metre.

Down in Hades Jesus meets Virgil, an episode which is thus described:

> But in his path a lonely spirit stood!
> A Roman, he who from a greater Greek
> Borrowed as beautifully as the moon
> The fire of the sun: fresh come he was, and still
> Deaf with the sound of Rome: forward he came
> Softly; a human tear had not yet dried.
> "Whither," he said, "O whither dost thou lead
> In such a calm all these embattled dead?" [1]

In 1897 appeared a collection of poems, including *The Woman with the Dead Soul* and *Marpessa*. The latter, a narrative poem of great beauty and dignity, tells how Marpessa is permitted by Zeus to make a choice between the god Apollo and a young man named Idas. She chose Idas, who addressed her in these words:

> Not for this alone do I love thee, but
> Because infinity upon thee broods;
> And thou art full of whispers and of shadows.
> Thou meanest what the sea has striven to say
> So long, and yearned up the cliffs to tell;
> Thou art what all the winds have uttered not,
> What the still night suggesteth to the heart.
> Thy voice is like to music heard ere birth,
> Some spirit lute touched on a spirit sea.[2]

It is in poetic drama that Mr. Phillips has attained high rank among English writers. His first success was *Paolo and Francesca* (1899), a tragedy in blank verse. Based upon one of the most touching scenes in Dante's *Divine Comedy*, it is a story of love in medieval Italy. The fall of the lovers is enlarged from Dante's sketch with a delicacy and restraint

[1] Printed from *Poems* (1898) by permission of the John Lane Company.

[2] By permission of the John Lane Company.

which at once attracted favorable notice. There are many fine scenes such as the parting between Paolo and Francesca before his departure from Rimini. The best-drawn character is Lucrezia, whose speeches possess dramatic as well as poetic strength.

The poetic tragedy entitled *Herod* (1900) has a historical background. Herod is deeply in love with his wife Mariamne, whose brother Aristobulus he elevates to the place of High Priest. Suspicious that his brother-in-law may desire the throne, Herod orders the prince to be slain. When the queen learns that her brother is dead, her love turns to hatred. It is in the second act that she says to Herod —

> Back, and in the jungle burn
> Whence you did leap out at my brother's throat.
> Can you deny your part in this? O subtle!
> Half suitor and half strangler, with one arm
> About the sister's neck, the other hand
> About the brother's throat![1]

Among the later works of Mr. Phillips the most notable are *Ulysses* (1902), based upon the old Homeric romance; *The Sin of David* (1904), the love story of Sir Hubert Lisle in the year 1643; *Nero* (1906), with the beautiful speeches of Agrippina; *Pietro of Siena* (1910); *The King* (1912).

The poet who now writes for the stage has to compete with costume, scenery, and music, which tend to divert an audience from the charm of noble diction. Under these conditions it is extremely difficult to write theatre-verse, verse direct enough for strictly dramatic purposes. Mr. Phillips has been more successful than either Tennyson or Browning in writing poetic dramas or dramatic poems. He has achieved distinction in narrative and lyric verse, and he has also won the approval of intelligent playgoers. When he will

[1] By permission of the John Lane Company.

pause long enough to reveal the motive behind the deeds of his characters, when he attains uniform simplicity of style, Mr. Phillips may restore English poetic drama to the power which it exerted centuries ago.

Harley Granville Barker (1877–), a native of Kensington, London, was in his fourteenth year when he first appeared on the stage. For several years he was associated with the Stage Society of London, and especially with the plays of Mr. Shaw. In 1904 he joined Mr. J. E. Vedrenne in the management of the Court Theatre, and three years later he declined the post of director of the New Theatre in New York.

The earliest play of this actor, manager, and playwright was *The Marrying of Ann Leete* (1902), the story of a young lady who became the bride of a gardener. Much more successful was *The Voysey Inheritance* (1905), a strong play about a lawyer who died in honor, leaving his son the task of adjusting the father's secret dishonesty.

The ordinary dramatic artist feels that it is necessary in the opening scene to convey to the audience a clew to the action of the play. Everything in a regular play tends toward the working out of the author's purpose, yet in real life this is never the case. Mr. Barker tries to be so true to real life that during the earlier scenes of *Waste* (1907), the audience is puzzled to catch the drift of the tragedy. This is a new element in drama, and has its dangers, since art is never a mere photograph of life. *The Madras House* (1910) is a play which, influenced by Shaw in its method, concerns itself mainly with the destiny of woman; while *Rococo* (1911) is a one-act play, another of Mr. Barker's experiments in stagecraft.

Beyond a doubt he makes his characters use the language of everyday life, but much that is said is trivial or irrelevant, and therefore has no place in art of any kind. Mr. Barker creates lifelike characters because he is a man of

originality, a man who finds a certain pleasure in all the people of his plays. He has not always been successful in catching the fancy of the playgoing public, yet he is one of the most promising exponents of what Mr. Shaw terms the New Drama.

The Irish Dramatic Movement

Ancient Irish literature includes no drama in the strict sense of the term. Ireland gave birth to playwrights like Goldsmith and Sheridan, but there was no native drama in existence until near the close of the nineteenth century. The Irish dramatic movement endeavors to represent national life in a manner so convincing that its charm will leap across the footlights to the hearts of the audience. Too often this native drama is concerned only with the gloomy side of lowly country folk, yet in time it will doubtless deal with people who are happy and normal in every way.

This literary movement really had its beginning about the year 1890. In 1891 Mr. Yeats established the National Literary Society in Dublin, and two years afterward other organizations were founded. In 1899 the Irish Literary Theatre came into existence, and three years later Mr. W. G. Fay gathered around him the Irish National Company, which later became the Irish National Theatre Society. In 1904 the Abbey Theatre of Dublin opened its doors for the representation of native drama by Irish actors. The great task of this drama is to knit every part of the country in oneness of feeling through the art of imaginative literature. If it continues to keep this noble purpose in view, the Irish dramatic movement may ultimately seize and uplift every heart in the romantic Emerald Isle.

Lady Augusta Gregory (1852–) comes from Roxborough in County Galway. In her *Poets and Dreamers*

(1903) she tells of her experiences in collecting stories from the humble people of Connemara and the Aran Isles of western Ireland. Her literary reputation is based upon her work as a translator, a collector of folk-lore, an essayist, and a playwright. She was one of those who took part in the establishment of the Irish Literary Theatre. Some of her own plays have appeared in Ireland, England, and America.

So many of the Irish plays were serious that it occurred to Lady Gregory to write some farces in order to cause a little innocent laughter. Among these is *Spreading the News* (1904), which, like *The Jackdaw* (1907), is a genial satire on gossip or love of scandal. Longer than either of these is *The Image* (1909), whose fun is perhaps less enjoyable than that of *The Bogie Men* (1912).

Among Lady Gregory's historical plays are *Kincora* (1905), dealing with a hero of the eleventh century; *The White Cockade* (1905), whose scene is laid in an inn of the later seventeenth century; and *Devorgilla* (1907), which presents life in Ireland after the arrival of the Normans.

The Gaol Gate (1906) is a realistic folk-tragedy of modern times, showing how "Denis Cahel died for his neighbour." *MacDarragh's Wife* (1912) and *Grania* (1912) are serious and memorable stage-pictures.

Lady Gregory may not be an illustrious playwright, yet she deserves praise for her undoubted talent and for her life-long devotion to the spiritual uplift of her native country. If she possesses scant knowledge of stagecraft, at least she has done much to stimulate others to serve their homeland through the medium of the theatre. In scenes of humor and pathos she is often admirable.

William Butler Yeats (1865–). — More than any writer of to-day the genius of Mr. Yeats resembles that of M. Maeterlinck, the Flemish or Belgian dramatist. The genius of both men lies not merely in the artistic use of an-

cient legends or folk-lore, but in a sensitiveness to the unseen forces that sway mankind. Both men seem to feel that the invisible world is more real than the world of matter. Both are satisfied that man is at times the plaything of powers, evil powers, more real than the witches of *Macbeth*. The Irish poet is the more melodious, the Flemish poet the more dramatic. Difference in birthplace and ancestry is nothing as compared with kinship of spirit, a kinship which is in no sense a mere imitation of the one by the other. The Irish poet's attitude toward life is clearly expressed in his *Ideas of Good and Evil* (1905).



FIG. 153. — William Butler Yeats.

In his twenty-third year Mr. Yeats left Dublin for London, where, in 1889, he published his first volume of poems, *The Wanderings of Oisin*. Readers are led back to the ancient hero-myths of Erin, to landscapes seen through the colored haze of floating mists. A single passage from this romantic poem may illustrate the distinction and delicacy of its style. Oisin, a hero of ancient Ireland, was hunting deer, when he and his companions came to a grassy hill —

> And found on the dove-gray edge of the sea
> A pearl-pale, high-born lady, who rode
> On a horse with bridle of findrinny (bronze);
> And like a sunset were her lips,
> A stormy sunset on doomed ships;
> A citron colour gloomed in her hair,
> But down to her feet white vesture flowed,

And with the glimmering crimson glowed
Of many a figured embroidery;
And it was bound with a pearl pale shell
That wavered like the summer streams,
As her soft bosom rose and fell.[1]

In 1893 Mr. Yeats issued a volume of prose sketches entitled *The Celtic Twilight.* Four years later came *The Secret Rose,* with its stories of Hanrahan the Red. A most notable collection of lyrics is *The Wind among the Reeds* (1899). There is high pleasure for the sympathetic reader of poems such as *When You Are Old, To Ireland in the Coming Time, The Lake Isle of Innisfree, Dream of a Blessed Spirit.* Human and playful is the picture of *The Fiddler of Dooney,* who feels sure that St. Peter will ultimately call him through heaven's gate —

And when the folk there spy me,
They will all come up to me,
With "Here is the fiddler of Dooney!"
And dance like a wave on the sea.

Besides editing the works of the English poet William Blake, Mr. Yeats has written prose tales, lyrics, and dramas, tinged with the supernatural. The *Countess Cathleen* (1892, revised in 1911) is weird and impressive. It is a drama based upon Irish tradition. The countess is the great lady of a famine-stricken district in Ireland. Demons disguised as merchants come to buy the souls of the poor, but the generous countess saves them until her own resources are exhausted. Then she sells her soul to save the people, but on the Day of Judgment she is forgiven, for God judges the intention rather than the deed. Old Oona says to her mistress —

[1] This and other citations by permission of The Macmillan Co.

Dear heart, make a soft cradle of old tales,
And songs and music: wherefore should you sadden
For wrongs you cannot hinder? The great God
Smiling condemns the lost: be mirthful: He
Bids you be merry and old age be wise.

Another of the plays is *The Land of Heart's Desire* (1894, revised in 1912). It is a single-act ideal treatment of the supernatural. The simple country folk of the play are living figures. Father Hart, the old priest, gentle and wise in the wisdom of God, is living, too. The hearts of these people beat warm and true. The time is May-day Eve, when the ghosts of ancient customs walk abroad. Maire Bruin has listened to the green-clad children of Fairyland, who lure mortals to the land of eternal play. Her heart is divided between love of her husband and the craving for the sound of rippling feet that dance in the sheen of moonlight. The fairy in the guise of a child entices Maire's spirit to leave the peace of home-quietness. Her body lies on the primrose littered cottage floor, and the soul of Maire has passed to the Land of Heart's Desire.

Another fanciful imaginative drama is *The Shadowy Waters* (1900), whose hero Forgael fails to see that true love ennobles earthly emotion and makes it holy. *The King's Threshold* (1903), a blend of seriousness and comedy, has much more sentiment than the drama just mentioned. Among the better known plays is *On Baile's Strand* (1904). It may be called a mythic tragedy in which Cuchulain slays his son, and dies in the madness of despair. The one-act romance tragedy *Deirdre* (1906), named after its heroine, shows us the beautiful lady who with her young lover dies in the woodland lodge of the old king's palace. *The Green Helmet* (1910) is one of the more recent dramas.

With Mr. Stephen Phillips, Mr. Yeats has been more successful in poetic drama than any of the poets of the Victorian period, and this is true even if we admit that he is greater as a

poet than as a dramatist. Through his sympathy and his genius he has exalted the very heart of his native land. He has found his chief inspiration in the days of ancient chivalry. He knows how to give high artistic form to his imagination and feeling. With patient effort he has gained a sure mastery of rhythms untried by any of his associates, and in all his work his own individuality is dominant. As an exponent of Irish idealism Mr. Yeats deserves the thanks of all lovers of literature for having given noble utterance to that spirituality which has for ages been the chief glory of a proud and valorous people.

John Millington Synge (1871–1909) was born at Newtown Little, near Rathfarnham, about four miles south of Dublin. After attending private schools in Dublin and in Bray, he was taught by a private tutor until he entered Trinity College, Dublin, in 1888. He travelled in Europe, and for several years spent part of each year in France and part in Ireland. In 1898 he met Mr. Yeats, who induced Synge to devote himself to the expression of life in western Ireland. Impressions of his visits are recorded in *The Aran Islands* (1907), a book of sketches in prose.

Some of the devices of stagecraft Synge had learned abroad, and the result is that his plays are well constructed, even if some of his themes are by no means typical of Irish manners. The earliest play was *In the Shadow of the Glen* (1903), a one-act tragi-comedy which was first produced by the Irish National Theatre Society in Dublin. It is a sketch of a loveless marriage between Nora and Dan Burke, a gruff old farmer.

Synge's tragic masterpiece is *Riders to the Sea* (1904), whose leading figure is old Maurya. Already her husband and five of her sons have been lost at sea. Bartley, the sixth and last of them, rides away on a gray horse. The mother is still lamenting the death of Michael, when the villagers carry to her something in a wet sail-cloth. She knows she

has lost her last son. "They're all gone now, and there isn't anything more the sea can do to me."

The story of two blind old beggars, Martin and Mary Doul, is told in *The Well of the Saints* (1905). Each fancies that the other is beautiful. A saintly friar restores their sight by means of water from a holy well. They find that real life is poorer than the dream life of their blindness. Again they lose their eyesight and are content.

On its first appearance *The Playboy of the Western World* (1907) caused a riot in Dublin. The plot centres round Christy Mahon, who falls in love with Pegeen, the innkeeper's daughter. He is called the playboy because of his prowess in athletics. His father, whom he thought he had killed, appears, and again the playboy attacks him. The hero of this sensational play ought not to be taken too seriously.

Deirdre of the Sorrows (1910) did not appear on the stage till after its author's death. The legend of Deirdre, the Irish Helen whose lover is slain by the old king Conchubar, is one of the most beautiful in the world's literature. Synge depicts Deirdre, not as a queen, but as an artless child of nature. The diction is based upon that of Irish country folk to-day.

As a playwright Synge constructed most of his work with care and skill. His was an ill-balanced genius, endowed with true imaginative quality. The sarcastic humor and the melancholy which appear so often in his plays are the outcome of his peculiar nature. Whether he has always succeeded in presenting true pictures of Irish life is extremely doubtful, yet every one will admit that Synge was a master of vigorous and often beautiful diction and description.

2. *POETS*

Fiona Macleod (1856–1905), a woman's name, was for a time the pen-name of William Sharp, who was born at Paisley

in the Scottish Lowlands. Under his real name he was a London literary critic. It seems that in 1886 during a severe illness he saw visions and dreamed dreams. Some of these visions and dreams he put into prose and verse, publishing them as Fiona Macleod.

The Mountain Lovers (1895) is one of several romantic novels. It tells of people who lived close to nature, sensitive to life's mysteries. *The Sin Eater* (1895) and *The Divine Adventure* (1900) are among his best prose works.

The House of Usna (1900), written in beautiful imaginative prose, was performed by the Stage Society of London. *The Immortal Hour* (1900), in blank verse, is less dramatic than its predecessor.

One of Sharp's volumes of poems, *The Hour of Beauty* (1907), illustrates his ornate style.

Like Sir Walter Scott, Sharp was sympathetic toward the folk-lore and legends of his country. He is at his best when he seeks to interpret what he has read or heard about the remote past. Not one of his productions is without some phrase or conception of arresting felicity. His works, influenced by Rossetti, are exalted by a tender and intimate feeling for nature. She seems to charm Sharp with her beauty and to awe him with her might and her mystery. Whether his work be in prose or in poetry, its subtle word-magic gives ready utterance to his fleeting emotions. Few modern writers have portrayed the vague longings of the human soul with such suggestiveness.



FIG. 154.— William Watson.

William Watson (1858–) spent his childhood years at

Burley-in-Wharfedale, Yorkshire. For a young man of twenty-two *The Prince's Quest* (1880) was a remarkable production. It is a metrical romance of about two thousand lines, unequal in execution. Throughout there is a subtle sense of rhythm and melody, a power of coining the phrase that clings to one's memory.

> So hour by hour (thus ran the Prince's dream)
> Glided the boat along the broadening stream,
>
> Over the errant water wandering free,
> As some lone sea-bird over a lone sea.[1]

The *Epigrams* (1884) and *Poems* (1892) are more polished, and the thought is more condensed than in Mr. Watson's earlier efforts. The terse witchery of his epigrams is well shown, for instance, when he says —

> Forget not, brother singer! that though Prose
> Can never be too truthful or too wise,
> Song is not Truth, not Wisdom, but the rose
> Upon Truth's lips, the light in Wisdom's eyes.[2]

Among later volumes of poetry are *The Purple East* (1896) and *Sable and Purple* (1910).

Like Mr. Yeats and Mr. Phillips, Mr. Watson has contributed to the progress of poetic drama. The choicest of his more recent works is *The Heralds of the Dawn* (1912), a play in eight scenes, written with the author's accustomed mastery of blank verse. There are scenes of war, of the populace in the city streets, of the palace, after the manner of traditional drama. The play endeavors to express a people's longing for a better social system, a system which comes through the accession to the throne of a royal idealist.

[1] By permission of the John Lane Company.

[2] From *Collected Poems* (1899) by permission of the John Lane Company.

Among the finer features of this little play are the rare diction, the terse dialogue, and the varied form of expression suited to each of the characters.

The outstanding merits of Mr. Watson's poetry are its clearness, its distinction of phrasing, its restraint. He is not content with melody, however sweet. Reason controls his imagination, impelling him from different angles to exhibit interest in man's nature and destiny. For him perfection of utterance is merely a means to an end, a means of reaching the intelligence through emotion.

George W. Russell (1867–), whose pen-name is A. E., was born at Lurgan in the north of Ireland. He is a poet, playwright, journalist, and painter. In earlier years he read Oriental literature, an experience which no doubt largely accounts for his mysticism, for his belief that things seen are less real than things unseen. There is literary kinship or spiritual affinity between William Blake, Mr. Yeats, Fiona Macleod, and Mr. Russell.

Among Mr. Russell's volumes of verse are *Homeward: Songs by the Way* (1894), *The Earth Breath* (1898), and *The Divine Vision* (1904). In these volumes we see the gentler side of the Irish temperament—its wistfulness, its tenderness, its dreaminess. Instead of the blast of the war-bugle we hear the melodious summons to fight against the gaudy trifles of this world. In the midst of realities Mr. Russell cherishes only the ideals that dwell in his own heart, a heart sensitive to beauty of thought and deed and form.

Distinction and delicacy mark such a poem as *Awakening*, one of the numbers in the first of the preceding volumes:

> The lights shone down the street
> In the long blue close of day.
> A boy's heart beat sweet, sweet,
> As it flowered in its dreamy clay.

Beyond the dazzling throng
And above the towers of men
The stars made him long, long,
To return to their light again.

They lit the wondrous years,
And his heart within was gay;
But a life of tears, tears,
He had won for himself that day.[1]

Laurence Binyon (1869–). — When *Admonitions of the Instructress in the Palace* (1913) was published by Laurence Binyon, the public first became aware that the British Museum had in its service a highly gifted connoisseur, who had devoted many years to the study of Chinese and Japanese art. Previously he had been known to most people as one of the most promising poets of the present generation, and the author of plays such as *Paris and Œnone* (1906) and *Attila* (1907).

His *Lyric Poems* (1894) is a work which was largely inspired by Matthew Arnold, but *London Visions* (1896) reveals vigor and independence. One poem entitled *The Statues* is well worthy of comparison with Keats's *Isabella*. Good sense is glorified by happy imagery when Mr. Binyon tells of the "glad ones" who are passing along the street in the evening. These people are not cruel. They are simply heedless of "the statues," that is, of the deaf, the blind, and other unfortunates. Later volumes of verse are *England and Other Poems* (1909) and *The Flight of the Dragon* (1911).

John Masefield (1875–) was born in Shropshire. He spent a roving youth on water and land, came to America in his twenty-eighth year, but now lives in England. During these years he was able to gather material which he was shaping into prose, into drama such as the unsuccessful

[1] Copyright by The Macmillan Co.

Pompey the Great (1910), and into narrative poetry. This is how he begins a sea-yarn called *The Port of Many Ships*, one of a volume of weird short stories entitled *The Mainsail Haul* (1913).



FIG. 155. — John Masefield.

> Down in the sea, very far down, under five miles of water, somewhere in the Gulf of Mexico, there is a sea cave, all roofed with coral. There is a brightness in the cave, altho it is so far below the sea. And in the light there the great sea-snake is coiled in immense blue coils, with a crown of gold upon his horned head.
>
> He sits there very patiently from year to year, making the water tremulous with the threshing of his gills. And about him at all times swim the goggle-eyed dumb creatures of the sea. He is the king of all the fishes, and he waits there until the judgement-day.[1]

Only a master of prose could write sentences so clear and so vivid. Mr. Masefield has also done notable work in domestic tragedy, that is, in tragedy whose characters are not persons of social distinction. In the newest type of domestic tragedy, not even great events are necessary. The catastrophe is the natural outcome of the ordinary circumstances of life. A poor orphan lives in the home of her ill-tempered aunt. The girl is sensitive because her father has been hanged in Gloucester jail for an offence of which he was not guilty. The girl is so persecuted by her aunt and her

[1] By permission of The Macmillan Co.

cousin that at last she is heart-broken, quarrels with her fickle lover, and drowns herself. This is the story of the *Tragedy of Nan* (1908), whose dialogue is written in the rural dialect of Gloucestershire. It is a literary effort of extraordinary power, much more impressive than most of the so-called successes of the stage.

The scientific spirit which takes nothing for granted, but proves all things, has helped to make poetry change its tune. Scenes, perhaps undreamt of by Wordsworth, have yielded their dark secrets to modern realism. Realism, the unflinching gaze upon things as they are, is an element in the spirit of the age. This has led to an ever-widening sympathy with human sorrow, a sympathy that leaps out from the pages of Mr. Masefield. No poet was ever more sensitive to suffering. *The Story of a Round-House and Other Poems* (1912) contains a long narrative in seven-line stanzas, a biographical poem, and many short poems dealing chiefly with the sea. *Dauber* is an account of a lad who longed to become a painter. When he went to sea he had some rough experiences. The poem, too long perhaps, has some powerful sea pictures and no little pathos. If neither Shakespeare nor Whitman nor Kipling had written poetry, Mr. Masefield's work might have been different. He is original, however, in the best sense of the term.

Mr. Masefield has revived the art of story-telling in verse. *The Daffodil Fields* (1913) is a long narrative poem dealing with country life. In striving to make poems like *The Widow in the Bye Street* realistic, Mr. Masefield did not scruple to employ slang and other forms of rude colloquial speech. In *The Daffodil Fields* his characters are educated people of Shropshire, two men and a woman. Both men are in love with her, but she prefers the less worthy of the rivals. Deserted by him, she marries the man for whom she has no affection. She repents when the loved one returns. Then fol-

lows the inevitable tragedy. The theme is set forth with fidelity to human nature, yet with delicacy of feeling and beauty of diction. The picturing of everyday rural manners is accurate as well as poetic. The interest and emotional strength of this poem indicate that Mr. Masefield is steadily growing in metrical skill, in clearness of purpose, and in the ability to carry most of his readers wherever he cares to lead them. He has excelled in many kinds of writing, but it is as a narrative poet that he seems likely to find a place of honor in the history of English literature.

Wilfrid Wilson Gibson (1878–), more than any of the younger English poets, selects his material from the haunts and the labors of the common people, but he is not pessimistic like Mr. Masefield, because he has a deeper insight into life's purpose. His early poetry, like *The Golden Helm* (1903) and *The Nets of Love* (1905), was pretty and conventional. Now his art is vital because of its human interest, its power of portraying the heroism, the pathos, the beauty, underlying themes the most unpromising.

Among his later works is *Daily Bread* (1910), a series of seventeen little poems dealing with the lives of working-folk. He does not tell everything; he leaves something to the imagination. Perhaps the most dramatic poem is *The Night-Shift*, which tells of a coal-miner caught down below in a pit disaster, while his young wife lies ill in bed. She fancies she hears the tapping of her husband's pick, and his mother, who alone knows that the man is dead, tries to soothe Jenny, her daughter-in-law.

Tamar. A pick —
Ah, God!
Nay, daughter, there is nothing.
You must lie quiet now
Or you —
Jenny. Tap — tap —
It goes on tapping, tapping.

In the dark —
It's dark — so dark;
And I can scarcely breathe,
The darkness lies so heavily upon me
As though I wandered somewhere underground
With great rocks hanging overhead
So close that my hair brushes them
Although I can not see them.[1]

Mr. Gibson deals with simple things in a simple way. The language is stripped of all needless ornament in *Fires* (1912), which contains twenty-one narrative poems. This collection forms a series of pictures larger and more truthful than *Daily Bread.* Sombre they are, but not hopeless. The verse is often irregular and experimental, as if the poet were groping for new possibilities in verse. They are poems of transition, poems symbolic of a new sense of brotherhood. On the whole Mr. Gibson's work is more refined, more poetic, than that of the other humanitarian poet, Mr. Masefield, although in sea poetry the latter has no superior at the present moment.



FIG. 156. — Alfred Noyes.

Alfred Noyes (1880–), whose birthplace is Wolverhampton, in Staffordshire, was writing verse while he attended Exeter College, Oxford. He has lectured in both Britain and America, and in 1914 was chosen as Visiting Professor of English Literature at Princeton University.

Among his publications in England are *The Loom of Years*

[1] By permission of The Macmillan Co.

(1902) and *The Flower of Old Japan* (1903), the latter of which introduces us to a wonderland where delicate lyrics charm the reader with their fancy and romance. In *The Two Painters*, for instance, —

> Peonies, peonies thronged the May
> When in royal-rich array
> Came Sawara to the school
> Under the silvery willow-tree —
> To the school of Tenko!
> Silver bells on a milk-white mule,
> Rose-red sails on an emerald sea![1]

Neither *The Forest of Wild Thyme* (1905) nor *Forty Singing Seamen* (1907) was so well received by the critics as *Drake* (1906–1908), an epic which singled out Mr. Noyes from other living poets. Both Swinburne and Kipling acknowledged him as a true poet. Drake, the old sea-captain, is taken as the personification of Elizabethan England, an England which is supposed to have been filled with high moral purposes. Spain, on the other hand, is represented as the type of evil in the world. The ideals are noble, even if we admit that the poet has exaggerated the good in England and the evil in Spain. In spite of a lack of fire here and there, *Drake* is a notable achievement in stately blank verse, interspersed with beautiful lyrics. As a work of art it is superior to *The Enchanted Island* (1909), whose moral teaching is too direct to suit every reader of poetry.

Among the latest of the American editions of the works of Mr. Noyes are the drama entitled *Sherwood* (1911), a story of Robin Hood, and *Tales of the Mermaid Tavern* (1913). Perhaps the Mermaid tales show an occasional excess of sentiment, yet they are full of mirth, spirit, and genuine poetry. Through ballads and songs the figures of Raleigh

[1] Printed, like the next extract, by permission of The Macmillan Co.

and Shakespeare and many another leap into life as the poet unfolds his panorama.

> And, suddenly, as a song that wholly escapes
> Remembrance, at one note, wholly returns,
> There, as I knocked, memory returned to me.
> I knew it all — the little twisted street,
> The rough wet cobbles gleaming, far away,
> Like opals, where it ended on the sky;
> And, overhead, the darkly smiling face
> Of that old wizard inn.[1]

The two volumes of *Collected Poems* (1913) exhibit great variety in subject and in style, though the poet has tried few daring experiments. Mr. Noyes has mastery of diction and of metre, and, like Mr. Masefield, he has a passion for the sea in all its aspects.

These two poets represent two different tendencies that are more or less present at every stage of literature. Each man is popular, each is a story-teller, each attempts to glorify life through sentiment and imagination. Mr. Noyes is the happier, the more musical, the more like Tennyson and other masters of English poetry. He is the chief living exponent of poetic romance, of verse based upon idealism. He is endowed with the historical imagination, with reverence for what is best in the past. Mr. Masefield, endowed with social imagination, finds his chief joy in a serious regard for the present, in seeing men and things as they are, and in transforming them through the divine gift of insight touched with emotion.

3. *PROSE WRITERS*

William Frend De Morgan (1837–), a native of London, was well past middle age when he wrote his first and best novel entitled *Joseph Vance* (1906), the story of a waif who sacrificed himself for the sake of another. He follows

[1] By permission of the Frederick A. Stokes Company.

Thackeray and Dickens in interrupting the narrative by speaking directly to the gentle reader. The book was popular, not by reason of its rather weak plot, but by the skill with which it portrays the development of character.

The heroine of *Alice-for-Short* (1907) is a puny girl adopted by an artist and his sister. Here, as in his previous work, the author looks at life tolerantly. His eyes seem to twinkle with a kindly humor, and what he sees he describes in a leisurely manner. *Somehow Good* (1908), while less pleasing than its two predecessors, is better constructed than either of them. *It Never Can Happen Again* (1909) is superior to *An Affair of Dishonour* (1910) and *A Likely Story* (1911). In drawing portraits of humble people Mr. De Morgan is careful and sympathetic. His style suggests the Victorian period.



FIG. 157. — Joseph Conrad.

Joseph Conrad (1857–) gives details of his career in *A Personal Record* (1912). His full name is Joseph Conrad Korzeniowski, a name that belongs to the Ukraine in Russia. Left an orphan in his thirteenth year, the young lad of Polish parentage sailed all over the globe in the British merchant service, rising to the rank of captain. He now lives in a quiet Essex village.

Lord Jim (1900) tells of a young Briton in Eastern waters. He is in a decrepit old steamer with hundreds of Arab passengers. When danger comes, Lord Jim forsakes what he regards as a doomed vessel, and he never forgives himself for his weakness. One of the best volumes of short stories is *'Twixt Land and Sea* (1912).

The fancy of Mr. Conrad often turns to the element of blind chance in human life. He has the depressing notion that accident is a leading feature in the struggle for existence. If the bomb-thrower in *Under Western Eyes* (1911) had not chanced to have a keen eye, there would have been no story. Mr. Conrad's *Chance* (1914), a work of genius, deals with the effect of circumstances upon character. The heroine believes that no one could be permanently attracted to her, and by chance she attains happiness.

As a painter of the sea and of tropical life, Mr. Conrad is the great living master of English prose fiction. He has always been an artist in the use of words, and he takes pride in putting conscience into his work. His adventure stories are told in a roundabout way, yet he holds the attention with ease. Nina of *Almayer's Folly* (1894), the first of his stories, is one of the finest pictures of primitive woman. Mr. Conrad is a writer of individuality. For those who are weary of the commonplaces of a sheltered civilization his works are a refreshing tonic.

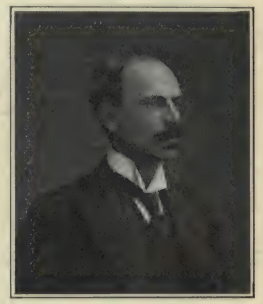


FIG. 158. — Maurice Henry Hewlett.

Maurice Henry Hewlett (1861–), a native of Kent, attributes much of his literary taste and skill to his father, but he speaks indifferently of the influence of school and college life. He was fond of reading and writing long before he went to Oxford, and all his books to some extent exhibit the impression made upon him by his literary predecessors.

Mr. Hewlett's greatest achievement in historical romance was *Richard Yea-and-Nay* (1900). It is not the Richard of *Ivanhoe* that we see, but the same monarch brought to life by the magic power of a man for whom bygone

centuries are still throbbing with reality. Dignity of treatment and swiftness of action combine to make a memorable prose romance.

Later writings comprise *The Song of Renny* (1911), another medieval romance in which we see the castle of Earl Gernulf. Love and war are depicted with skill and virility. A tale of early nineteenth century English life is entitled *Mrs. Lancelot* (1912). Its manner, especially in the earlier chapters, suggests to most readers the influence of George Meredith. A sequel to this novel is *Bendish* (1913), with its disguised portraits of Byron, Moore, and Shelley. Mr. Hewlett asserts that Lord Bendish is not Byron, yet he certainly looks like a caricature of the English poet. The novel, too, like Meredith in style, is cleverly written. It is as a polished writer of short stories and of lifelike medieval romances that Mr. Hewlett will be remembered, for somehow his modern novels are too artificial to be convincing.

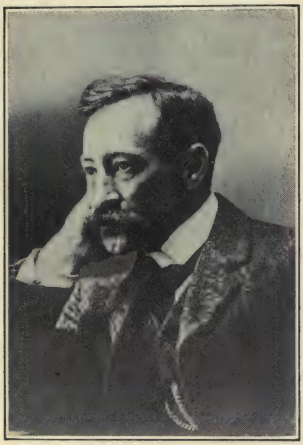


Fig. 159. — Eden Phillpotts.

Eden Phillpotts (1862–), like Kipling, was born in India of English parents. As Mr. Thomas Hardy is known by his powerful Wessex novels, so Mr. Phillpotts has won fame by his novels about Dartmoor, a part of Devonshire, England. One of the best of his earlier novels is *The Children of the Mist* (1898), wherein with rare skill and sympathy he depicts the simple rural folk and their surroundings. Some of the scenes are gloomy and depressing. *Widecombe Fair* (1913) is the greatest of the series of Devonshire stories.

In *The Joy of Youth* (1913) the hero is a young painter living in Florence. Neither this novel nor *From the Angle of Seventeen* (1914) is worthy to rank with the best of the Dartmoor stories. The latter story shows us a clever youth of seventeen in London. As a realistic novelist of the moors Mr. Phillpotts is second only to Mr. Hardy.

William John Locke (1863–) claims the Barbados, West Indies, as his birthplace. He received his degree at St. John's, Cambridge, and later he became an architect. The novel by which he is best known is *The Beloved Vagabond* (1906), whose hero is a wandering exile named Paragot. In *The Fortunate Youth* (1914) the hero is a boy who grew up from the slums and became a prominent figure in English politics.

In the kind of characters with whom he has deepest sympathy Mr. Locke resembles Smollett and Dickens, yet his style is different from either. Behind his drollery and his lively fancy is abundant knowledge of human nature. Where most people would merely pass by with contempt, he finds something lovable, so that his vagabonds or Bohemians are never tiresome.

Richard Pryce (1864–) has a Welsh surname, but he was born at Boulogne, France, of English parents. After spending most of his early years abroad, he went to England to be educated at Leamington. Besides plays such as *The Visit* (1909), he has written novels that are persuasive and interesting.

The leading figure in *Elementary Jane* (1897) is a little music-hall singer in London. She loves the wrong man, yet she is true to her choice. As a sympathetic and able study of human nature the novel is better than *Jezebel* (1900), whose heroine is the high-spirited daughter of an English lord. At times *Jezebel* suggests Meredith or Mr. Hewlett. The hero of *Christopher* (1911) is not eccentric like the chief

characters in Mr. Locke's works. He is simply a man who reveres beauty in human conduct.

Few male novelists understand women of all classes so thoroughly as does Mr. Pryce. Portrait after portrait he has sketched with truth and delicacy. Neither in his themes nor in his style is he sensational, yet he is a realist in the sense that he finds pleasure in studying the ways of mankind. No doubt men are influenced by heredity, but this is not the sole explanation of human conduct. Fatalism, the idea that we are the playthings of heredity and environment, is a weakness, whether it appears in Mr. Hardy, Mr. Phillpotts, or in Mr. Pryce. Whatever tends to sap courage ought to be kept within bounds, for men and women are free agents to a greater extent than some novelists fancy.

Israel Zangwill (1864–), the son of a Russian Jew, is a Londoner by birth. At sixteen he became both author and publisher by writing a story and going into partnership with another youth in the publication. Later he received the bachelor's degree at the University of London.

It was *The Children of the Ghetto* (1892) that first brought literary recognition to its author. It is a brilliant revelation of the dreams and tragedies of life in the Ghetto or Jewish quarter of London. Three of his other works of prose fiction are *Dreamers of the Ghetto* (1898), *The Mantle of Elijah* (1900), and *The Grey Wig* (1903).

Besides poems like *Blind Children* (1903), Mr. Zangwill has written plays that sparkle with epigrams. *The War God* (1912) is a short tragedy in blank verse, teaching the doctrine of peace. The scene is laid in a country which is not called Germany, though it has German characteristics. If the poetry is not of the highest quality, at least the play contains many smooth and charming passages, and there is no little humor. It is a great theme which prompted *The Melting-Pot* (1913), a play dealing with the Jewish immigrant in

New York. Mr. Zangwill conceives of the United States as a place for the fusion of different races into a great new race of free men. The author's wit and idealism convey a sense of passionate sincerity.

THE SHORT STORY

The short story, in the popular sense, goes back to the earliest days of mankind. The myths of primitive tribes, the fairy tales and fables of barbaric tribes, are the ancestors of the tale or simple narrative of higher civilization.

There is a difference between a short story and a story that is merely short. Short story is a phrase that has become technical in meaning. Its length is less important than its structure. Poe regarded it as a story which leads to a definite outcome foreseen by its author. The structure of the plot, the details of description, the choice of words, as in the case of a well-constructed play, contribute to form a finished work of art. A vivid impression is made upon the reader by the rapid development of an incident to its necessary climax.

Out of the character sketches of Addison and Steele's *Spectator* came the novel of Richardson and the true short story, first attempted by Irving in *Rip Van Winkle* (1819) and by Scott in *Wandering Willie* (1824). Poe, the first great exponent of this literary type, wrote two kinds of short stories. In the one the action grows in intensity from the first paragraph to the last, as in *Berenice* (1835). In the second the tangled problem is followed by a solution, as in *The Murders of the Rue Morgue* (1841). Nathaniel Hawthorne in stories like *The Birthmark* (1843) and Bret Harte in *The Luck of Roaring Camp* (1868) carried on Poe's triumphs in the American short story. When Stevenson had written *A Lodging for the Night* (1877) and other short stories, he was followed by Mr. Kipling's *Without Benefit of Clergy* (1890).

Thus the English short story attained the highest distinction.

It is not merely in length that the novel and the short story differ. The novel presents a series of impressions, distinct in character, whereas the short story conveys a single sharp impression. The short story focuses all its power upon one angle or phase of an incident or a character, and it achieves its purpose quickly. The great diversity of interests in modern life tends to create a taste for the one-act play, the wordless drama of the motion picture, and the subtle artistry of the short story. Developed in America and in France, the short story became a new mode of utterance for men of genius like Mr. Kipling, who have shaped it into a form of art not much inferior to poetry.

Rudyard Kipling (1865–)

People may like or dislike Mr. Kipling; he is sure to attract attention. As a child he played about the streets of Bombay "between the palms and the sea" until he was sent to England to be educated. On his return to India he became subeditor of a newspaper at Lahore (1882–1889), contributing stories and verses for Anglo-Indian periodicals. He has written many books dealing not only with India but with all parts of the British Empire, and in recent years he has become the poet of Anglo-Saxon Imperialism.

One of the most famous of Mr. Kipling's earlier collections is the *Barrack-Room Ballads* (1892), twenty-one in number. They are of unequal merit, some of them unredeemed by a touch of tenderness and pity, yet all are invested with human interest to a high degree. The best is *Mandalay*, describing the feelings of a soldier who looks back regretfully upon a love affair in the Far East. The poem certainly possesses real melody and a certain pathos. In *The Seven Seas* (1896) the

author seeks to arouse Britain to a sense of her destiny as a great civilizing power. We miss the rich blustering humor of some of the earlier soldier and sailor songs, but these poems, in spite of occasional slang and Cockney dialect, are more restrained. All are conspicuous for simplicity and directness. In the opening *Song of the English* Mr. Kipling rises to true poetry. *Songs From Books* (1912) contains *If*, a brilliant expression of manliness, even though most of the stanzas have no strong lyric touch.



FIG. 160. — Rudyard Kipling.

As poet of the empire, poet of soldier and engineer, poet of the people, Mr. Kipling will be remembered mainly by such poems as *Mandalay* with its note of homesickness, *McAndrew's Hymn*, and the noble *Recessional* (1899).

Kim (1901), among the novels, is Mr. Kipling's highest achievement. Kim, the orphan child of an Irish sergeant in India, grows up among the Hindus, and becomes a member of the British Secret Service. His adventures throw a vivid light upon native ways, illustrating the gulf that separates the Oriental cast of mind from that of Europeans and Americans.

Mr. Kipling has succeeded in making the short story the principal vehicle for his ideas. When *Plain Tales from the Hills* (1887) appeared in England, it was like the discovery of a new world. These stories of English military life in India caught the fancy of schoolboys as well as of learned critics.

Mr. Kipling's most fascinating works are *The Jungle Book* (1894) and *The Second Jungle Book* (1895). Mowgli, a man-child, is cared for by a she-wolf, and he grows up among the wild beasts or "people of the jungle." Their nature and their habits he understands, and among them he is happy. Toward children Mr. Kipling has always shown tenderness. Who does not know *Wee Willie Winkie* (1888), and the two children in *Puck of Pook's Hill* (1906), and in *They* the souls of little dead English children walking in the wood? No wonder that children love the author of such narratives.

A collection of later short stories is *Actions and Reactions* (1909). If they lack the hot enthusiasm of youth, such gems as *An Habitation Enforced* and *The Bee Hive* are really impressive. The author can set the scene, create the characters, and start the action before the reader is aware of how it has all been done. *The Dog Harvey* (1914) is by no means the first short story in which Mr. Kipling, like Walter Scott, betrays his fondness for dogs.

So far as verse is concerned, Mr. Kipling believes that nothing is common or unclean. He employs the Elizabethan ballad stanza, the nursery rime, the popular song, and any other rhythm whose lilt or swing may suit his purpose. In seeking to put life into his work he turns to the idioms and the actual dialogues of common folk, a plan which has been followed by later verse-writers like Mr. Masefield. Love of mystery, worship of the man who has done something, hunger for fact, are elements in Mr. Kipling's varied genius. His reputation rests chiefly upon short stories like *The Brushwood Boy*. An inspired journalist, a master of many moods, he has a true feeling for the value of words, for the cadence that carries thought with greatest ease. No Englishman and few Frenchmen can match Mr. Kipling in the short story, where nothing is lost, yet much is left to the imagination.

Herbert George Wells (1866–). — When we meet a stranger, it is usually the eyes that first attract us, but in the case of Mr. Wells we are attracted by his sensitive mouth, the mouth of a poet and a dreamer. A native of Bromley, Kent, in turn he was a draper's apprentice, a student of science, a teacher, a weaver of dreams. He learned to write by editing the students' magazine at the Royal College of Science, and then by contributing to educational papers. At heart he is romantic, idealistic, a dreamer, yet the trend of his writing is scientific. In choosing such themes as are found in *The War of the Worlds* (1898), *The First Man in the Moon* (1901), and *The Food of the Gods* (1904), Mr. Wells resembles Jules Verne, the French writer of prose fiction.



Courtesy of Harper and Brothers

FIG. 161. — Herbert George Wells.

A plea for socialism is the essence of *In the Days of the Comet* (1906). Germany and Britain were at war before the coming of the Comet. Warfare ceases, people become angelic, the novelist's dream of human happiness is realized. Knowledge of women is shown in *Marriage* (1912). The lovers elope, and each is astonished to find that the other is not perfect. Finally they go to wild Labrador and find life so attractive there that they solve their difficulties outside of the divorce court. The book is clever enough, even if it contributes little to the solution of to-day's social problems. In *The Passionate Friends* (1913) we discover a social and political treatise in the guise of a novel. Youthful love is pictured with rare sweetness and purity,

but the main theme is rather disagreeable. The heroine is alive and natural; the other characters are puppets that echo the ideas of their maker.

Mr. Wells is at his best when he presents scientific romances. No one knows what he will do next, for he has the gift of bending to his purposes the law of surprise.

Arnold Bennett (1867–) was born at Hanley in the pottery district of North Staffordshire, the region which in some of his prose fiction is named "The Five Towns." For a time he was in a lawyer's office, and in 1896 he became editor of a London paper called *Woman*. One of the most prolific of current writers, he resembles Messrs. Phillpotts and Wells in having written some works whose value is transient. *The Old Adam* (1913), one of the so-called fantasies, is sometimes amusing, seldom really natural.



Courtesy of "Review of Reviews"

FIG. 162. — Arnold Bennett.

Mr. Bennett's reputation rests not upon collections of critical essays such as *Fame and Fiction* (1901), or upon witty plays after the style of *What the Public Wants* (1909). He mounted the rungs of the ladder of fame by the aid of volumes of short stories like *The Grim Smile of the Five Towns* (1907) and by the aid of his more serious novels. Partly through study and admiration of French prose fiction, and partly through the experience he gained while editor of *Woman*, Mr. Bennett is at times concerned with women and women's problems. This is shown in his masterly novel entitled *The Old Wives' Tale* (1908). Two Staffordshire sisters, starting with the cheeriness of healthy girlhood, are described minutely till they become unhappy aged women, ready

for the grave. It is an extraordinary study of ordinary people.

A trilogy is a series of three stories that form a single picture or history. *Clayhanger* (1910) is the first part of a trilogy which is intended to show how old English customs are yielding to the influx of new ideas. A taste for sociology is inducing the more ambitious novelists to portray the life of a whole community through the study of individuals, and this is what we find in these two great character sketches, *The Old Wives' Tale* and *Clayhanger*. Perhaps both novels would have been better, had they been shorter.

Sometimes echoing the views of Mr. Bernard Shaw, Mr. Bennett discloses little real sentiment in treating of love and old age. Love is a delusion, and old age is an inconvenience — to be forgotten as soon as possible. Before it has become aware of the flight of time, youthful enthusiasm steadily shrivels into the apathy of old age. This view of life may be true to human nature, but it is scarcely the whole truth. Probably Mr. Bennett does not intend us to take his serious novels too seriously, and this may be one reason why he zigzags from sombre realistic novels to stories that are extravagant and jocular. More than once has he struck that note of spiritual intensity which, under all its make-believe cynicism, is the keynote of the modern world.

Gilbert Keith Chesterton (1874–) is a humorist who enjoys the reputation of being the most brilliant and wayward of England's literary critics. Not to speak of *The Wild Knight and Other Poems* (1900), he has written stories with odd titles such as *Manalive* (1912) and *The Flying Inn* (1914). The former teems with whimsical fancy and clever character sketching; the latter, in the guise of a sort of romance, criticises the foreign policy of the author's native land.

A keen, shrewd judge of human nature, Mr. Chesterton's pen-portraits and book reviews are memorable. There is no

question about his originality. Probably he would be the last man to expect his readers to agree with every opinion expressed in a work like *Varied Types* (1903). Cold logic is foreign to his temperament. He prefers to utter his views in frequent epigrams, sudden and vivid as flashes of lightning. Stevenson himself had no surer instinct for the right word, the only word. What is Mr. Chesterton's art in its essence? It is the art of prodding us into wakefulness, the art of disclosing glimpses of that something, at once poetic and prophetic, which throbs deep within human nature everywhere.

SUMMARY

1. Recent literature of the British Isles reflects social tendencies. Some writers seek the improvement of society by bringing in the best that is without; others seek to find a remedy for social evils by changes that begin within the country. The former are romantic like Mr. Kipling and Mr. Noyes; the latter are realistic like Mr. Shaw and Mr. Masefield.

2. Great knowledge of stagecraft characterizes the plays of Mr. Jones and Sir Arthur Wing Pinero. Mr. Shaw, more sensational than either of these playwrights, by his brilliant wit appeals to the head rather than to the heart.

3. One of the most popular of recent dramatists is Sir James Barrie, whose plays, like his novels, possess humor and sympathy. Mr. Galsworthy, also a novelist and playwright, is a realist.

4. Poetic drama has Stephen Phillips as one of its representatives. Mr. Barker is writing experimental plays in order to bring the stage closer to real life, while the Irish dramatists are largely interested in portraying rural life in the Ireland of to-day.

5. Recent poetry is well represented by Fiona Macleod

(Wm. Sharp) in Scotland, by Mr. Watson and Mr. Binyon in England, and by Mr. Russell in Ireland.

6. Mr. Masefield and Mr. Gibson are both realists, the latter of whom is less popular but more polished. It is in narrative verse that the former excels. Mr. Noyes is fond of romance and he resembles Mr. Masefield in his love of the sea.

7. In prose fiction Mr. De Morgan has drawn attention by his character drawing, and Mr. Conrad, by his sea stories. Mr. Hewlett is noted for his style, especially in historical romance, and Mr. Phillpotts is known through his realistic novels concerning Dartmoor in Devonshire.

8. Eccentric characters make the strongest appeal to Mr. Locke. As for Mr. Pryce he resembles Mr. Bennett in being one of the few novelists that can portray life-like women. Mr. Zangwill's specialty is his own people, the Jews.

9. The short story is not a story that is merely short. It is a highly finished literary type as distinct as a sonnet. Every word counts for something in producing a sense of unity and completeness. The greatest English exponent of the short story is Mr. Kipling, who has also written poetry and novels.

10. The specialty of Mr. Wells is scientific romance, while that of Mr. Chesterton is literary criticism.

Test Questions

1. What has caused the recent revival of English drama? What is its chief purpose apart from entertainment?

2. Why is Mr. Shaw not classed with the Irish school of playwrights? Why is he so well known? Indicate the meaning of the title *Man and Superman.*

3. Distinguish between wit and humor, and name any dramatist whom you regard as humorous. In what way did journalism aid Barrie to become a novelist and a dramatist? Compare Barrie and Galsworthy in regard to their style.

4. In what poem is Jesus represented as meeting Virgil? Do you remember any of the heroes or heroines mentioned in the plays of Mr. Phillips or Mr. Barker?

5. Write a letter to a friend, stating what you know about the purpose of the Irish dramatic movement.

6. In the form of an essay compare any two of the living poets.

7. Which of the writers of prose fiction seem to be most interested in the common people? Give a reason for your answer.

8. What novelists have been most attracted by the sea?

9. Which living writers have gained fame by their short stories?

10. Explain what is meant by Pharisees, the New Drama, domestic tragedy, the Ghetto, and trilogy.

ADDITIONAL AUTHORS WITH CHIEF WORKS

Dramatists. — George Moore of Ballyglass (1853–), *The Bending of the Bough;* Frank Frankfort Moore of Limerick (1855–), *The Mayflower;* Edward Martyn (1859–), *The Heather Field;* St. John Emile Clavering Hankin (1869–1909), *The Cassilis Engagement;* Max Beerbohm (1872–), *The Happy Hypocrite.*

Poets. — Katherine Tynan Hinkson (1861–), *Collected Poems;* Henry John Newbolt (1862–), *Admirals All;* Herbert Trench (1865–), *Deirdre Wedded;* Richard Le Gallienne (1866–), *Robert Louis Stevenson and Other Poems;* Ethna Carberry (1866–1902), *The Four Winds of Erin;* Dora Sigerson Shorter (1873–), *The Fair Little Maiden;* Richard Middleton (1882–1911), *Poems and Songs.*

Novelists. — Rosa Mulholland (Lady Gilbert, 1855–), *A Round Table;* Rider Haggard (1856–), *King Solomon's Mines;* George Gissing (1857–1903), *New Grub Street;* Jane Barlow (1857–), *Irish Idylls;* Sir Arthur Conan Doyle (1859–), *Sherlock Holmes;* Samuel Rutherford Crockett (1860–1914), *Strong Mac;* Arthur Christopher Benson (1862–), *The Isles of Sunset* (short stories); William Cook Mackenzie (1862–), *The Lady of Hirta;* Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch (1863–), *The Splendid Spur;* William Wymark Jacobs (1863–), *Many Cargoes;* Arthur Morrison (1863–), *Tales of Mean Streets;* Frank Danby (Mrs. Julia Frankau, 1863–), *Pigs in Clover;* Anthony Hope (Anthony Hope Hawkins, 1863–), *The Prisoner of Zenda;* Neil Munro of Inveraray (1864–), *John Splendid;* Marie Corelli (1864–), *The Sorrows of Satan;* Robert Smythe Hichens (1864–), *The Garden of Allah;*

Guy Newell Boothby (1867–), *Pharos the Egyptian;* Seumas MacManus (1870–), *The Chimney Corner;* Alfred Ollivant (1874–), *Bob, Son of Battle,* a famous dog story; Mrs. Henry Dudeney (1875–), *Folly Corner.*

Essayists. — William Archer (1856–), *Masks or Faces;* Arthur Symons (1865–), *Plays, Acting, and Music;* Edward Verrall Lucas (1868–), *Life and Letters of Charles and Mary Lamb;* Hilaire Belloc (1870–), *Caliban's Guide to Letters.*

SUPPLEMENTARY READING

For the convenience of readers who may desire to become more familiar with the leading twentieth-century writers, the American publisher of each author's works is herewith submitted: namely, Jones (Macmillan); Pinero (Baker Co.); Shaw (Brentano, and John Lane Co.); Barrie (Scribner, and Doran Co.); Galsworthy (Scribner); Stephen Phillips (Macmillan, and John Lane); Barker (Mitchell Kennerley); Gregory (Putnam's, and Scribner); Yeats (Macmillan); Synge (Luce Co.); Fiona Macleod (The Mosher Press, Portland, Maine); Watson (John Lane Co.); Russell (Macmillan, and Mosher Press); Binyon (Dutton, and John Lane); Masefield (Macmillan); Gibson (Macmillan); De Morgan (Holt); Conrad (Doubleday Page, and Harper); Hewlett (Scribner); Phillpotts (Macmillan, Little Brown, and John Lane Co.); Locke (John Lane Co.); Pryce (Houghton); Zangwill (Macmillan); Kipling (Doubleday, Page); Wells (Harper); Bennett (Doran Co., and Dutton); Chesterton (John Lane Co., and Dodd Mead). Doubleday Page will mail booklets upon Conrad and upon Kipling (with bibliography), five cents each.

The following works are also recommended:

E. A. Albright, *The Short Story,* N. Y. (Macmillan), $.90.

Charlton Andrews, *The Drama of To-day,* Philadelphia (Lippincott), $1.50. Discusses British, Continental, and American drama.

W. Archer, *Playmaking, a Manual of Craftsmanship,* Bost. (Small, Maynard), $2.00.

W. Archer, *Poets of the Younger Generation,* N. Y. (John Lane), $6.00. Includes Binyon, Kipling, Stephen Phillips, Watson, Yeats.

F. Bickley, *John Millington Synge,* Bost. (Houghton), $.75.

E. Björkman, *Voices of To-morrow,* critical studies, N. Y. (Mitchell Kennerley), $1.50. Includes Conrad and Gissing.

M. Bonner, *Maurice Hewlett*, a critical review, Bost. (J. Luce Co.).

M. Bourgeois, *John Synge and the Irish Theatre*, N. Y. (Macmillan), $2.50.

G. K. Chesterton, *George Bernard Shaw*, an illustrated biography, N. Y. (John Lane), $1.50.

F. T. Cooper, *Some English Story Tellers*, N. Y. (Holt), $1.60. Includes Conrad, De Morgan, Hewlett, Phillpotts, Kipling, Locke, Galsworthy, Bennett, Ollivant, Hichens.

R. M. Deacon, *Bernard Shaw as Artist-Philosopher*, N. Y. (Lane), $1.00.

A. Dukes, *Modern Dramatists*, Chicago (C. H. Sergal), $1.50. Includes Shaw, Barker, Galsworthy.

J. B. Esenwein, *Studying the Short Story*, N. Y. (Hinds, Noble), $1.25.

Lady Gregory, *Our Irish Theatre*, N. Y. (Putnam's), $1.15.

E. E. Hale, Jr., *Dramatists of To-Day*, N. Y. (Holt), $1.50. Includes Pinero, Shaw, Stephen Phillips.

Clayton Hamilton, *The Theory of the Theatre*, N. Y. (Holt), $1.50.

Clayton Hamilton, *Studies in Stagecraft*, N. Y. (Holt), $1.50.

A. Henderson, *European Dramatists*, Cincinnati (Stewart & Kidd Co.), $1.50. Includes Barker, Shaw, Wilde.

P. P. Howe, *Dramatic Portraits*, N. Y. (Mitchell Kennerley), $1.50. Includes Pinero, Jones, Barrie, Wilde, Shaw, Barker, Galsworthy.

H. Huneker, *Iconoclasts;* a book of dramatists, N. Y. (Scribner), $1.50. Includes Shaw, etc.

A. Jessup and H. S. Canby, *The Book of the Short Story*, N. Y. (Appleton), $1.10.

Henry Arthur Jones, *Renascence of the English Drama*, N. Y. (Macmillan), $1.75.

J. M. Kennedy, *English Literature*, Lond. (Sampson Low), $2.00. Includes Shaw, Wells, Yeats, Fiona Macleod, Binyon, Le Gallienne, Gissing.

R. Le Gallienne, *Rudyard Kipling;* a criticism, N. Y. (Lane), $1.50.

Brander Matthews, *The Short Story*, N. Y. (Amer. Book Co.), $1.00.

Justin Huntley McCarthy, *Irish Literature*, 10 vols., N. Y. (Bigelow Smith), $37.50.

P. Elmer More, *The Drift of Romanticism*, Bost. (Houghton), $1.25.

Alfred Noyes, *Collected Poems*, 2 vols., N. Y. (Stokes), $3.00.

W. Lyon Phelps, *Essays on Modern Novelists*, N. Y. (Macmillan), $1.50. Includes Kipling, De Morgan, Hardy, Ollivant.

Mrs. Sharp, *Collected Papers, Critical and Reminiscent*, N. Y. (Duffield), $1.50. The papers are those of Fiona Macleod.

C. Weygandt, *Irish Plays and Playwrights*, Bost. (Houghton), $2.00. Includes Yeats, Russell, Gregory, Synge, and Fiona Macleod (a Scot).

W. A. Young, *A Kipling Dictionary*. Characters and scenes in the stories and poems, N. Y. (Dutton), $3.00.

DIGEST

A DIGEST of the principal literary events, used with or without the summary and the test questions toward the close of each chapter, ought to prove of great value in reviewing whatever reading or study has been accomplished.

For the sake of precision this book contains the chief dates of English literary history, so far as they are known, but no one dreams of memorizing all or even most of them. What is essential is to have a clear conception of the century or the period when an important writer lived. In addition it is desirable to know the name and the nature of one or more of his best works, especially those that are expressive of the age in which he played his part.

Any one who wishes to extend this digest can easily do so by reference to the body of the text. The main thing is to be able to trace the development of English literature century after century, as it continues to shape itself in harmony with the changing ideas and ideals of humanity. A vision of this sort will fill us with a burning desire to read and enjoy the choicest prose and poetry. Since all literature is social in origin, a few social or political events are presented in a parallel column, but not for the purpose of memorizing. Social events are merely the background of literary events.

Time		Event	
Century	Period	Literary	Social
1st B.C.	Earliest Prior to 449 A.D.	Oral prose and verse	Julius Cæsar in Britain, 55 B.C.
1st A.D.		Writing introduced	Partial Roman conquest, 43 A.D.
3d		Alphabet familiar	Missionaries in Ireland
5th	Anglo-Saxon 449–1066	Magic verses, etc.	Angles and Saxons in Britain about 449 A.D.
6th		Gildas writes in Latin	
7th		*Widsith*, *Beowulf*, Cædmon	English students in Ireland
8th		Latin letter by Alcuin *Dream of the Cross* Cynewulf's poems Bede's *Church History*	
9th		Chronicle about the Danes King Alfred's Translations	
10th		*Battle of Brunanburh* *Maldon* Ælfric's prose	Alfred dies, 901 Battle of Maldon, 991
11th		Wulfstan's prose	
	Anglo-Norman 1066–1300	*Apollonius of Tyre*	Edward the Confessor, 1042 Norman Conquest, 1066 First Crusade, 1095
12th		Geoffrey of Monmouth's *History* Love-songs	Richard I, 1189–1199
13th		Layamon's *Brut* *Ancren Riwle* The Debate Cuckoo Song	Magna Charta, 1215

Time		Event	
Century	Period	Literary	Social
14th	Chaucer 1300–1400	*Piers Plowman* *Pearl* Barbour's *Bruce* Wyclif's *Bible* Mandeville's *Voyage and Travel* Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*	The Black Death Battle of Bannockburn, 1314
	Ballads	*Young Beichan* *Bewick and Grahame* *King Estmere* *Battle of Otterburn* *Sir Patrick Spens* *Robin Hood Ballads*	Battle was in 1388
15th	Transition 1400–1564	*Kingis Quair* Malory's *Morte d'Arthur* Poems of Henryson and Dunbar	Turks capture Constantinople, 1463 English printing, 1476 Columbus in America, 1492
16th		Poems of Douglas More's *Utopia* (Latin) Wyatt and Surrey	Henry VIII, 1509–1547
	Early Dramatic	Lyndsay's *Satire of the Three Estates* *Ralph Roister Doister* *Gammer Gurton's Needle* *Gorboduc*	
	Shakespearean 1564–1616	Sidney's *Arcadia* Spenser's *Faerie Queene* Bacon's *Essays* Marlowe's tragedies Shakespeare's *Julius Cæsar*, *Hamlet*, etc.	Elizabeth, 1558–1603 First English theatre, 1576 Drake sails round the world, 1577–1580. Raleigh founds a Colony in Virginia, 1585.
17th	Miltonic 1616–1660	Authorized Version of Bible Ben Jonson's plays and poems	James I, 1603–1625 Pilgrim Fathers in America, 1620

Time		Event	
Century	Period	Literary	Social
		Beaumont and Fletcher Walton's *Compleat Angler* Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* Milton's *L'Allegro, Il Penseroso*, etc.	Civil War begins in 1642
	Restoration 1660–1700	Locke's *Essay concerning Human Understanding* Pepys's *Diary* Dryden's prose and poetry	Charles II, 1660–1685 Royal Society founded in 1662 James II, 1685–1688 William and Mary, 1689–1702
18th	Classical 1700–1760	Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* Addison and Steele's *The Tatler* and *The Spectator*, including the Sir Roger de Coverley Papers Boswell's *Life of Johnson* Burke's *Speech on Conciliation with America* Pope's *Rape of the Lock* Gray's *Elegy*	Anne, 1702–1714 First London daily paper, 1702 Battle of Culloden, 1746
	The Novel	Richardson's letter-novels Prose fiction of Fielding Sterne and Smollett Goldsmith's *Vicar of Wakefield*	George II, 1727
	Romantic 1760–1837	Cowper's *John Gilpin* and other poems	American Revolution, 1775

Time		Event	
Century	Period	Literary	Social
		Macpherson's *Ossian* Burns's poems and songs Poems of Wordsworth Coleridge's *Ancient Mariner*, *Christabel*, and *Kubla Khan*. Southey's Poems and *Life of Nelson*	French Revolution, 1789 Mutinies in the navy, 1797 Irish rebellion, 1798 First practical steamboat, 1802
19th		Byron's *Childe Harold* and other poems Shelley and Keats Frances Burney's *Evelina* Maria Edgeworth's *The Absentee*, etc. Jane Austen's novels Essays of Lamb, Hazlitt, De Quincey, and others Scott's *Lady of the Lake*, *Marmion*, and the novels	Prohibition of the English Slave Trade, 1807 Battle of Waterloo, 1815 Davy invents safety lamp, 1815 First steamer crosses Atlantic, 1819 First railway, 1824 Trade Unions, active 1825 Abolition of slavery in the British Empire, 1833
	Victorian 1837–1900	Tennyson's *The Princess*, *Idylls of the King*, etc. Browning's *Cavalier Tunes*, *The Lost Leader*, etc. Arnold's *Forsaken Merman* and *Sohrab and Rustum* Carlyle's *Essay on Burns* Trevelyan's *Life of Macaulay* Newman's novels and poem,	Electric telegraph, 1837 Photography, 1839 First employment of chloroform in surgery, 1847 First successful Atlantic cable, 1858 American Civil War ends in 1865

Time		Event	
Century	Period	Literary	Social
		Thackeray's novels and lectures	
		Dickens's novels	
		Mrs. Gaskell's *Cranford*	
		Reade's *The Cloister and the Hearth*	
		Kingsley's *Westward Ho!* and *Hereward the Wake*	
		George Eliot's novels	
		Ruskin's *Sesame and Lilies*	
		Blackmore's *Lorna Doone*	Discovery of so-called X-rays, 1895
		Huxley's *Autobiography* and *Lay Sermons*	National Insurance for British wage-earners, 1912
		Novels of Meredith and Stevenson	

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